

PRISONER-OF-WAR ORGANIZATION IN HANOI

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PRISONER-OF-WAR ORGANIZATION IN HANOI

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master
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by
Henry James Bedinger
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DEDICATION

To
LAURA,
the one who never knew
but waited.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of how American prisoners of war organized themselves in North Vietnam. Basically, this study seeks to explore what variables were significant in influencing the behavior of men captured and incarcerated in adverse conditions during an unpopular and controversial war. Although every war produces moral and political issues as well as heroes and victims, the purpose of this study avoids such questions which have been raised in many other mediums. Instead, this study is an attempt to ask analytical questions of an experience and to determine if the responses correspond to developments in organizational theory. In short, this study analytically elaborates the author's experiences as a prisoner of war in the perspective of organizational theory.

Statement of the Problem

Most of the works already published by former prisoners of war are narrative accountings of their experiences. In these accounts, many of these men credited the communication system as a major factor which helped them survive their captivity. At present, however, no one has attempted to analyze and assess how an

organization with a communication system was developed and maintained in the prisons of North Vietnam where communication between groups of prisoners was strictly forbidden. Moreover, no attempt to date has been made to integrate various viewpoints of former prisoners of war with the established concepts of organizational theory. What notions or fragments of organizational theory did these men find most useful in reconstructing a social order? In short, the problem can be simply stated by two questions: (a) How did prisoners of war organize and maintain a communication system when such activity was so restricted? (b) What were the significant variables which helped explain the control mechanisms in such an organization?

M. W. Riley (1963, p. 184) suggests that the first aspect of such a problem can be approached by observation, while the second more "subjective question" merits a process of questioning. Therefore, this study is not only a description of the organization but also a reflective articulation of the pattern of feelings, attitudes, role expectations, and interrelationships among the members. As such, this research is an exploratory case study which seeks to make explicit what remained implicitly understood in the everyday life of a prisoner of war. Then, and only then, can one more readily see how

the bits and pieces of knowledge used by prisoners of war fit into the larger framework of existing theory which has been called the *Principles of organization* (Caplow, 1964).

Definition of Terms Central to This Study

The definitional problems of any study concerning such concepts as authority, power, influence, control, and leadership are immense. Before the objectives and specific propositions of this study can be clearly understood, some operational definitions are in order.

Social scientists have fought a long and arduous battle over the meaning of these terms. Some writers (March & Simon, 1958) have even omitted using such ambiguous words as leadership from their work. Essentially there are three ways to approach the subject of authority, leadership, power, and influence. First, some writers use the terms power, authority, and influence interchangeably (Bennis, 1959, p. 260; Mechanic, 1962, p. 350). Secondly, many theorists view authority as a special case of power or influence. For example, Katz and Kahn (1966, p. 220) define authority as "legitimate power," while Bierstedt (1950, p. 736) views it as "institutionalized power." Thirdly, some scholars have considered authority as a relationship between individuals and groups which is developed through an ongoing

process of legitimization. Barnard (1938), Blau (1964), Peabody (1964), and Simon (1957) have all followed this third way. In the final analysis, most writers view authority as concerned with an organizational position, and leadership as a more general term which relates to a person.

, Authority: For the purpose of this study, authority relates to position and the legitimate right (as defined by just claims through the operation of law, custom, or any ongoing process of human activity) to issue orders inherent to that position. A *position* is "a point (location) in organizational space defined by one or more roles" (Katz & Kahn, 1966, pp. 179-180). A *role*, in turn, is defined as "an organized set of behaviors belonging to an identifiable office" (Mintzberg, 1973, p. 54). In the prisoner-of-war situation, the most identifiable office was the Senior Ranking Officer (SRO) who tried "to organize other men and to set important precedents for resistance" (Schein, 1958, p. 328). This study develops how the expectations of this role were formed, sent, received, and performed by many individuals. An important point to note here is that some SROs were strong leaders while others were at best indifferent or colorless. But all SROs had authority.

Power: The terms of influence, control, and power

are easily confused. Influence is the broadest term which relates to "virtually any interpersonal transaction which has psychological or behavioral effects" (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 220). Power "refers to potential acts . . . the capacity to influence" (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 220). In this sense, power is a latent force which when released results in influence and at times control. Control is successful influence such as the workings of a well coordinated traffic controller at an airport. An example of these three terms will clarify the issue.

If you are enjoying the scenery on a mountain road and a speeding car approaches from behind, you might pull to the side of the road to let him or her pass if the honking horn and close presence on your tail annoy you. In this case, the speeding car has exerted control if the driver actually wanted to pass you. However, suppose you feel his or her behavior was inappropriate and you desire to take some kind of action. You continue to plod around the curves and when you enter a passing zone, you accelerate so rapidly that the impatient driver behind you cannot pass. Such would be a case of influence without control. In either situation, your position ahead of the speeding motorist gave you the power to control the car behind you, which in turn could indubitably influence your behavior by honking and following you too closely.

French and Raven (1968) identified five sources of social power as follows: legitimate, reward, coercive, referent, and expert. This study seeks to expand this typology with the addition of information as another source of power because its influence was repeatedly observed in the prisoner-of-war setting. Information is not included in expert or referent power because it does not depend upon a person or on one's credibility; instead, information as an influence is taken at face value as being logical, rational, and plain commonsense truth. Stanley (1973) contends that "in every society persons perceive some objects, events, situations, and so forth as *intrinsically* right or wrong, coherent or meaningless, necessary or optimal" (p. 403). Thus, information rests on the presence of self-evident knowledge.

Behavior: Influence and control focus on behavior and attitudes in this study. Given a social situation, the result can follow basically two courses--obedience or deviance. Within these two areas, however, there is a wide range of acceptance or rejection. Three types of acceptance have been identified by Aronson (1972, pp. 27-38) as compliance, identification, and internalization. *Compliance* is that type of response which is based on the person's desire to be rewarded or to avoid punishment.

Identification is behavior which is adopted in order to place an individual "in a satisfying, self-defining relationship to the person or persons with whom he [or she] is identifying" (Aronson, 1972, p. 28). The attractiveness of the identity and not his or her immediate presence is the key to this response. *Internalization* is that behavior which is based upon a person's own deep-rooted system of values. "The motivation to internalize a particular belief is the desire to be right. Thus, the reward for the belief is intrinsic" (Aronson, 1972, p. 29). As such, internalization is "the most permanent, most deeply rooted response" (Aronson, 1972, p. 29) and best fits into "legitimate power" (French and Raven, 1968). Likewise, there are a number of actions open to members in any society to reject control. These are ignoring receipt of orders, changing orders to fit one's own needs, appeals to higher authority for support, open rejection, and finally resignations (Peabody, 1964, p. 115).

Organizational Structure: The structure of any organization resists any precise ideal or pure definition such as attempted by Weber (1947). Instead, this study uses the concept that organizational structure exists along a continuum. Burns and Stalker (1972, pp. 250-252) describe the polarity of this range as "mechanistic" and

"organic"; the former is hierarchic with differentiation of functional tasks, while the latter form is involved with continual redefinition of tasks through negotiated interaction and little emphasis on positions. Organic structure implies individual responsibility for the overall task in contrast to mechanistic form stressing obedience to superiors. Burns and Stalker (1972) state:

The mechanistic structure is appropriate to "stable conditions" like the routine of clerical bureaucracies, while the "organic" form is best suited to changing conditions which give rise constantly to fresh problems. (pp. 250-251)

The prisoner-of-war organization was mechanistic in that the hierarchy of military rank was a vertical alignment of authority which stressed obedience of orders from higher ranking officers, especially the SRO. However, because an organization is mechanistic does not dictate a rigidity of form. Burns and Stalker (1972, p. 253) mention the elastic quality of structure which allows an organization to fluctuate within a range on the mechanistic/organic continuum. For example, a mechanistic organization could become more or less participative and thus, more or less organic in its structure. This study not only will show this structural elasticity but also will seek to develop a relationship between structure and uncertainty. In short, the structure of the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi was observed to

become more mechanistic in times of great uncertainty.

Communications: The field of communication studies is replete with examples of the denotative and connotative levels of communication. Birdwhistell (1974) describes the difference as "between information theory which is about messages and their transmission and communication theory which is about interconnectedness and its maintenance" (p. 206). This study explores both levels of theory and stresses the *sense of community* which can arise from the maintenance of a communication system and the *influence* which can develop from information.

In discussions concerning the pattern of communications, this study uses the original terminology of Bavelas (1968) with one important addition of the all-channel network from Guetzkow and Simon (1955). Figure 1 presents five geometric patterns (all-channel, circle, chain, "Y", and wheel) with the dots denoting members of the system and the lines representing linkages. In the all-channel pattern, (a), each participant can communicate with any other member of the group. In the circle, (b), an individual is restricted to communication with only his neighbor on each side, but unlike the chain, (c), the circle has no ends. In the "Y" pattern, (d), one central member has three potential communication

points while in the wheel, (e), the central member is like the hub of a wheel and is the only member who can communicate to every individual in the group.

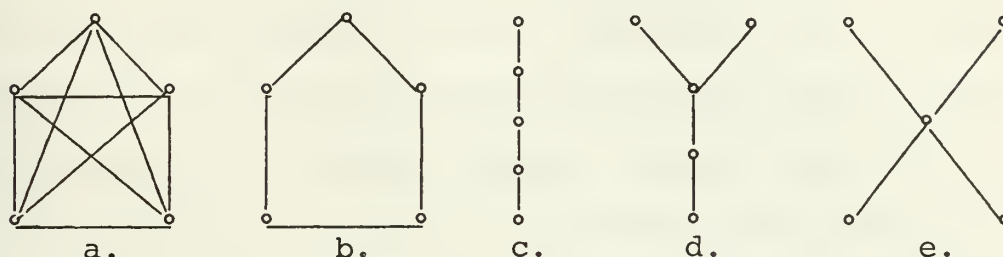


Figure 1

The five communication patterns
used in this study

Communications Technology: The primary technology employed by prisoners of war in communicating in North Vietnam was the tap code, a modification of the railroad code used before the introduction of Morse code. Tap code uses the letter "C" for the letter "K" and thus can break the alphabet into a five-by-five matrix (see Fig. 2). The key letters are "AFLQV" which were easily remembered by new prisoners by the adage "Air Force Likes Queer Virgins." The first series of tapping vertically identifies the row, and the second series denotes the column and thus pinpoints the letter. For example, three taps followed by two taps is the letter "M."

In order to expedite communication, many abbreviations were used; and commonly used words such as "no" (one tap) and "yes" (two taps) were reduced to short

signals. Tap code was basic and could be sent by exercising or waving one's arms in a meaningful rhythm. Some men used to sweep messages when they were cleaning the courtyard before a guard. Voice code was a vocal adaptation of the tap code in which one cough was one, two coughs two, a throat clearing three, a hack (the noise emitted when saliva is forcefully brought up the esophagus) four, and a spit or sneeze five. Therefore, the letter "M" in voice code was one throat clearing followed by two coughs. Although voice code was less effective than tapping on a wall, it was occasionally the only means available for reaching prisoners in remote areas where there was no common wall or foundation to act as a conductor for sound.

A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	I	J
L	M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T	U
V	W	X	Y	Z

Figure 2

The five-by-five matrix of tap code

Major Actors in This Study

The major actors of this study were observed in three prisons: Little Vegas, Camp Unity, and the

Plantation. These names were widely used in the prisoner-of-war system and are employed throughout this study to identify the setting.

Ernest C. Brace

Brace was a civilian pilot employed in a U.S. AID program to supply remote camps on the Laotian/Thailand border. He was captured in May of 1965 approximately fifty miles from Thailand in northern Laos. His North Vietnamese captors marched him over 300 miles to Dien Bien Phu, where he was kept for three and one-half years. In 1968, he was brought to Hanoi and made contact with Americans in the Plantation. From this point on, Brace was an avid communicator and helped the prisoner-of-war organization in both his example and ingenuity. This author became Brace's first roommate in 1969 and spent the duration of the war with him.

Lieutenant Colonel Ted Guy

Colonel Guy was known as the "Hawk" and provided strong leadership as the SRO of the Plantation in 1971 and 1972. He received wide publicity upon his return to the United States when he pressed legal charges against eight former prisoners of war. However, the case was never brought to trial.

Lieutenant Colonel Jim Hughes

Hughes was the roommate of Commander Jim Stockdale

at Little Vegas in 1970. Their differences over communication reportedly caused Stockdale, the camp SRO, problems in performing his role. When separated, Hughes became more active in communication and attracted attention and much criticism from other prisoners for his erratic ranting at the North Vietnamese.

Lieutenant Colonel Robin Risner

Shortly before his capture, Risner had received publicity on the cover of *Time* in 1965 and was accordingly treated with close attention by his captors. Many prisoners considered him to be the highest ranking prisoner of war because he had already been selected as a full colonel. However, Risner was still officially a lieutenant colonel at the time of his capture. He often served as SRO and provided many men with inspiration and hope in times of great uncertainty and doubt.

Commander James Stockdale

Stockdale was the highest ranking naval officer captured by the North Vietnamese. In March of 1976 he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his resolute resistance in the face of torture which has left him permanently handicapped. Known affectionately as "Chet" by prisoners who likened his walk to the character of Chester on the television show "Gunsmoke," Stockdale was a good example of strong leadership in an authority position; he often

acted as SRO when others more senior to him refused to assume the risks which accompanied the acceptance of the SRO role. When not in command, Stockdale remained an active resister and constantly assisted those senior to him.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Basis for the Study of Authority

The development of a literature on authority inevitably begins with Weber (1947) whose work stands as the classic on bureaucracy. Weber's focus is on the claim of legitimacy which he divided into rational-legal, traditional, and charismatic types of authority. The rational-legal authority type rests on the formal, impersonal order of positions which characterize modern corporate structure. From Weber's (1947) perspective, this rational-legal authority type is "the most rational means of carrying out . . . control over human beings" (p. 337). Although Taylor (1947) never specifically discusses authority, an implicit tenet of scientific management is that central coordination can determine the "one best way" to achieve the most efficient means of production. Gulick (1937, p. 7) condenses and focuses organizational theory onto this quest for an authority structure which will guarantee an effective system of communication and control. Hence, the conventional approach to authority stresses the impersonality of office which controls through a hierarchy of positions

and achieves efficiency by examining each person's function and by designing an appropriate task to his or her function.

In contrast to the conventional approach, the human relations school stresses the informal and subjective aspects of human interaction which in their view explain how organizations function. The writings of Mary Parker Follett (1940) and Elton Mayo (1946) are the foundation upon which this school of thinking rests. This human relations approach created a deep division among organizational theorists and thus clearly presented alternatives to the functional and structural emphasis of the conventional approach. There were attempts to reconcile these vastly different approaches as early as Barnard's study of the executive and his job (1938). However, the works of Blau (1956, 1963, 1964), Katz and Kahn (1966), March and Simon (1958), and Simon (1957) face the issue of converging the theoretical schools of thought more squarely. Bennis (1959) and Peabody (1964) give excellent reviews of this development and present typologies for describing the essential differences between these various approaches to the study of organizations. In addition, Peabody (1964, p. 35) examines empirical case studies on organizational authority along a continuum from temporary small groups to total institutions such

as prisons. This study focuses on the end of the continuum with military and prison organizations, for these types of organizations most nearly resemble the prisoner-of-war situation. In fact the prisoner-of-war organization is a unique type which perhaps falls somewhat beyond the prison administrations normally found in the United States because the prison management in North Vietnam had many more options available for coercing and breaking the will of their prisoners.

The literature on governmental and military bureaucracy is extensive, but one question appears nearly universal to all these studies. Why do subordinates obey their superiors? Presthus (1958) maintains that the cultural environment trains an individual toward compliance: "From infancy on, the individual is trained to defer to authority" (p. 57). Presthus' study of the Turkish coal industry confirms this emphasis on cultural values and socialization (1961, p. 24). Selznick (1963) also contends that from the very start of life, every individual "is conditioned to respond in socially determined ways" (p. 63). Thus, a core concept in sociology is the socialization processes which build group values into an individual. Caplow (1964) identifies ten modes of socialization as follows: schooling, training, apprenticeship, mortification, trial and error,

assimilation, co-option, conversion, anticipatory socialization, and screening (pp. 172-178). The key quality of this process is its continuation throughout the entire life of an individual. In the military, Dornbusch's (1955) study of the Coast Guard Academy and Janowitz's (1960) analysis of military career patterns are classic accounts of how socialization processes are utilized by the American military forces. Kaufman (1960) used a similar analysis in a larger organizational context. Yet, one disadvantage of this explanation and concept is its weakness in analyzing deviance from the expected norms.

When resistance to authority occurs, the concept of a continual definition of the latitude of authority is useful. Barnard (1938) recognized the subordinate's role in an authority relationship by his idea of a "zone of indifference" (pp. 168-169). Leighton (1964) recognized this zone in his study of the administration of a Japanese relocation camp and concluded that "in the long run it is the governed who determine the governing of men" (p. 367). In keeping with this analysis, Simon (1957) enlarged this concept and called it a "zone of acceptance" (pp. 133-134). An employee "in joining the organization accepts the authority relation" (March & Simon, 1958, p. 57). At the same time, Blau (1963)

shifted his thinking from authority through sanctions (p. 220) to a description of authority as a process which springs from social interaction vice formal organization (1956, p. 71). This viewpoint was supported by parallel studies of two welfare agencies (Blau & Scott, 1962). Moreover, the analysis of job content into prescribed and discretionary tasks by Newman and Rowbottom (1968) follows an increasing trend in organizational theory to recognize the definition of authority from both the superior's and the subordinate's viewpoint.

In relation to military organizations, a similar development has occurred. Smith (1949) best represents the early thinking which noted high ranking officers' emphasis on authority through the use of sanctions (p. 111). On the other hand, Janowitz (1959) recognized that military organizations "must shift from reliance on practices based on *domination* to a widening of *manipulation*" (p. 482), which he defined as group pressure and interpersonal competence. In the terminology of French and Raven (1968), expert and referent power must replace coercive and legitimate power. Peabody (1964) recognizes this distinction with the terms "formal" versus "functional" authority (p. v). Formal authority is legitimate and relates to position, while functional authority relates to competence and effectiveness in interpersonal

relationships. Recent developments in regard to group dynamics have placed increasing emphasis on what Peabody (1964) has called functional authority. Bennis, Benne, and Chin (1969) reflect the glowing optimism of the sixties when organic structure and participative management was viewed by many as a cure for the malaise infecting modern complex organizations. But there is emerging evidence that there is no panacea for the ills of bureaucracy (Meyer, 1972; Mintzberg, 1973; Smith & Jones, 1968).

Cartwright and Zander (1968) present an excellent treatment of the overall topic of group dynamics in which many articles contain sophisticated quantitative rigor and analysis. Although Thibaut and Kelley (1959) confine their study to groups of two or three, their use of mathematics to quantitatively measure power is useful from the standpoint of dependence needs. Furthermore, Smith and Jones (1968) studied the role of an interaction influence system in a planned change and quantitatively found no evidence to support the spread of influence to lower participants when there was more interaction in an organization (p. 181). Such a finding is in keeping with a quantitative analysis of governmental agencies by Meyer (1972) which found that no matter what program of change is established by an authority, there are

contravalling forces within the organizational structure which seek an equilibrium. Thus, "organizations are more stable than changing" (Meyer, 1972, p. 119). Still the conclusion of Burns and Stalker (1972) stands as follows: "The beginning of administrative wisdom is the awareness that there is no one optimum type of management system" (p. 255).

Informal Power

A central issue of this study emerges from Selznick's (1948) theory of "cooperative" systems and Mechanic's (1962) study of informal power sources. Selznick (1948) contends that informal patterns of influence are a spontaneous inevitability "based on personal relationships, and are usually directed to the control of some specific situation" (p. 32). Mechanic (1962) maintains that informal power is not necessarily derived from "personal characteristics, although these may be relevant, but results rather from particular aspects of their location within their organizations" (p. 350). Mechanic (1962) relates organizational power to access to "persons, informations, and instrumentalities" (p. 352); a person gains access to these variables the longer he or she is a member of the organization. Mechanic (1962) closely examines the various sources of power for lower participants and offers a number of

hypotheses concerning the formation of informal power. Since there is a wealth of work on personal attributes as a source of power, this study uses Mechanic's hypotheses concerning location and, more specifically, seeks to show how position and information can influence and even control an organization such as in a prisoner-of-war camp.

Communications

Bavelas (1968) presents an experimental framework for communications research used by Sidney Smith and Leavitt. Of the two experiments, Leavitt's (1958) is one of the most interesting and clearest studies concerning the importance of location. Students randomly divided into groups of five were given a simple problem to solve as a group. Each group was positioned in a pattern of a circle, chain, "Y", or wheel by use of partitions. Then each member was given five symbols from a total of six. The group communicated with messages and attempted to determine the symbol common to all members of the group. After numerous problems, each participant answered a questionnaire about his feelings toward the positions in the group and his progress during the experiment.

From the solutions to the above problem, Leavitt (1958) found significant differences between the patterns. For instance, "the circle showed no consistent

operational organization" (p. 553), and "the wheel was considerably faster (at its fastest) than the circle" (p. 554). From the questionnaires, Leavitt (1958) saw great satisfaction and leadership in the central positions and just the opposite in peripheral locations. He concluded that "centrality, then, is a function of the size of the pattern as well as of its structure" (p. 559). In other words, the circle has an even distribution, no leader, much activity, and satisfaction; the wheel represents the other extreme between which are the chain and the "Y" patterns. The closer one moves to the wheel, the more satisfaction the central position attracts, and the more dissatisfaction arises in the peripheral positions.

In a further refinement of Leavitt's (1958) experiment, Guetzkow and Simon (1955) used 56 groups of five participants each to explore whether the superiority of the wheel was due to the pattern itself or the time it took the members of each group to organize into a system. The results of their experiment showed that an all-channel network was just as effective as the wheel, once the optimal organizational pattern was discovered. Guetzkow (1968) refined this work further by examining "the mechanisms involved in the establishment of certain persons in particular positions" (p. 517), and found the individual's ability to differentiate roles to be as

significant a factor as the personal characteristics of intelligence and ascendance (p. 520). In another study, Guetzkow and Dill (1957) found that groups seem to prefer a minimum series of linkages. Therefore, Dubin (1959) concludes from the above studies and his own research that the lesser the number of communication linkages, the greater the efficiency of the groups in performing tasks. Caplow (1964, p. 264) sees many possibilities for organizational engineering in Dubin (1959) if, and only if, this hypothesis concerning minimum linkage could be substantiated.

Empirical Research

The above experimental work on communications and its importance to organizations receives much support from case studies of prisons and hospitals. A central thread which binds a number of these studies together is that when the position of a person or group of people in an organization gives access to information or other people, that individual or group has informal power and can influence or even control the organization. From Leavitt's (1958) laboratory to the harsh realities of prison, the location or position with access has power. McCleery (1972) describes a case where the guard force of a prison "lost its monopoly over communication channels and thus lost its control over formal policy" (p. 332).

In another study of prisons in Hawaii, McCleery (1968) found similar significance in communication patterns but in this case the prison management used communications to its advantage. "Without the support of such communication patterns, the nominal authority of position was meaningless" (p. 129). Hazelrigg (1968) offers several examples of organizational conflicts in prisons which support the source of informal power as location within and access to a communication system.

For precisely the same reason as above, a number of hospital studies have shown similar consequences of communication patterns upon formal and informal power. In Scheff's (1961) study of organizational conflict, hospital attendants achieved control over administrative policy. Since they were the only group who had complete 24-hour access to the wards, the physicians and administrators were dependent upon these attendants for information about and control of the wards. This structure gave the attendants sufficient power to turn aside a serious reform program initiated by the formal authorities. Thus, their actions controlled the organization.

The limits of informal power are noted most explicitly by Crozier (1964) who describes "a conflictive equilibrium" between expert and subordinate powers in which there is a rather stable "war of position"

(p. 170). This equilibrium closely parallels Meyer's (1972) description of bureaucracy. Sykes (1956) also depicts the limits of informal power by his idea of reciprocal agreements. Minor infractions are tolerated by the guards, and in return the prisoners do not create any major disturbances like a riot. Goffman (1961) qualifies this exchange by noting that any violations which are suspected to involve escape or revolt as an objective are reported immediately because the first and underlying goal of the prison or mental hospital is security (p. 186). Hence, much of the empirical research to date has served to clarify abstract concepts advanced by organizational theorists.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

One of the most crucial facets of a formal study is the methodology employed by the researcher. In other words, "the success of ex post facto explanation is a function of the 'process analysis'" (Bell, 1964, p. 853). This chapter develops what the specific objectives of this study are and what methods were used to reach these objectives. More specifically, procedures for the construction of the theoretical framework and internal questioning in the study are fully elaborated. Finally, this chapter describes several limitations of the approach used in this study and seeks to show how this study applies to organizations and society in general.

Objectives of the Study

This study addresses two specific areas of interest in the formal study of organizational theory: (a) the consequences of communications for organizations and (b) the role of formal authority. More specifically, the focus of this study centers on structural elements within the organization which influenced and at times controlled the behavior of many prisoners. Such an approach is in contrast to a psychological study which might delve into

the personalities of each individual within the organization. Hence, this study is an exploratory search for variables which might explain what made the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi work. As Schutz (1963) and Stanley (1973) have cogently argued, what people refrain from doing is equally as important as what they actually do. Therefore, the dependent variable of this research is both the attitude and behavior of the prisoners, while the independent variables fundamentally are the role of authority and the centrality of position.

The objective of this study is not to conclusively prove the significance of any one variable or to quantitatively measure or speculate on the amount of explained variation that an independent variable might add to total understanding. Rather, the primary objective hereof is to provide some insight into the nature of this organization without constructing a quantitative means to duplicate the research, but at the same time avoid mere speculation. In fact, the value of empirical research does not lie in its ability to be repeated but instead centers on the elucidation of experience in such a manner that a third person can understand or gain an insight into the experience without actually living it. A noted example of such research is provided by Leighton (1964) who described the administration of a Japanese

relocation camp in World War II. Another advantage of this approach is that "qualitative descriptions often serve the important purpose of dealing with the social system in the round" (Riley, 1963, p. 22). By such an approach, one can better achieve an overview of the situation. Finally, the value of this study with these objectives is its analytical clarification of a unique experience which could never be realistically simulated in an experimental setting.

The Theoretical Framework

The basic advantage of using theory in this study is that it provides a basis for asking key questions which help to uncover the implicit elements and variables in an organization. These variables are often so subtle that they are either taken for granted or completely overlooked. The virtue of theory is that it exposes the assumptions; it makes explicit the implicit. Moreover, by examining concrete experience in relation to theoretical and experimental findings one can better understand the abstract conceptualizations advanced by many organizational theorists. Hence, the benefit of this research is that it sheds new light on some old ideas about organizations and also helps to explain how prisoners of war organized themselves through a covert communication system.

The initial works used to formulate a theoretical framework for this study were Caplow (1964), Leavitt (1958), Peabody (1964), Simon (1957), Tannenbaum (1968), and Thompson (1967). These authors were chosen because of the comprehensiveness of their approaches and the attention they give to authority, communication, and organizational structure which directly pertain to the objectives of this study. From these works, specific propositions were examined on the basis of their applicability to the organization of prisoners of war; and from the remaining hypotheses and propositions, a number were chosen for their relevance to the author's experiences. For instance, there are many statements concerning goals and coalition behavior in the literature. Since the author was never in a large group, observations of coalition behavior were not as direct as those of one who had been in a large cell with several factions. Therefore, this issue was discarded from this discourse. However, as many propositions as were directly relevant to the author's experience are discussed and include the following.

1. The one-way relationship of "functions determine structure" (Tannenbaum, 1968, p. 34) is examined in light of structural changes in prison life.

2. When the functions of the organization changed,

there were corresponding changes in the informational content of messages within the system.

3. "In periods of crisis, formal authority is magnified" (Peabody, 1964, p. 137).

4. "When the individual believes that his [or her] cause/effect resources are inadequate to the uncertainty, he [or she] will seek to evade discretion" (Thompson, 1967, p. 119). Barnard (1938) observed this process as a widening of subordinates' zones of indifference which is the latitude of control granted to those in authority.

5. "The more sources of uncertainty or contingency for the organization, the more bases of power there are for power and the larger the number of political positions in the organization" (Thompson, 1967, p. 129).

6. "There is a direct relationship between the amount of effort a person is willing to exert in an area and the power he [or she] can command" (Mechanic, 1962, p. 359).

7. "Other factors remaining constant, the more central a person is in the organization, the greater is his [or her] access to persons, informations, and instrumentalities" (Mechanic, 1962, p. 361).

8. The more central the position, the more satisfaction a person experiences in his or her role (Leavitt, 1958, p. 557).

From these eight propositions, the original framework of this research was formed and then expanded to other more detailed studies. For example, both the concept of role theory (Katz & Kahn, 1966) and the hypothesis of minimum linkage (Dubin, 1959) were valuable tools for gaining insight into the working of authority and centrality of position in the organization. Moreover, a broad survey of the literature on bureaucracy as presented in the preceding chapter gives a historical perspective to this study and also helps to obtain a general overview of the development of organizational theory.

Internal Methodology

Most research involves the construction of a systematic way to collect data (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 478). Since in this study the bulk of the data is in the author's memory bank, a critical part of this work is the process by which data are drawn and used. Kerlinger (1973) describes such a process as "internal criticism" and stresses its importance on the validity of any historical study (p. 702). To enhance both the reliability and validity of this study, notes written immediately upon the author's release have been continually checked in addition to examining every work published by former prisoners of war in the Vietnam War. However, such a

procedure per se is not enough. In addition, the literature presented in two years of formal education at the graduate level has been employed to construct a theoretical framework and to interpret specific events. The question "Does this work apply to the prisoner-of-war organization?" was constantly used.

From this incessant inquiry, four questions emerged which were helpful in interpreting any experience. First, an experience which could better illustrate the hypothesis or proposition under study was searched for. In short, was this the best example to use? Secondly, any experience relating to the issue being examined that might tend to refute the point was sought. Thirdly, interpretations based on other concepts such as Homans' (1950) exchange theory or Berne's (1961) transactional analysis were explored for the purpose of insuring that the approach of this study was best suited to explaining what people had on their minds in the prisoner-of-war situation. Finally, the disadvantages or costs of personal interpretations were estimated in relation to the benefits; and where the costs exceeded the benefits, the interpretation was dropped in favor of a more plausible interpretation. For instance, role theory and authority did not adequately explain deviant behavior whereas the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger,

1957) appeared to be very applicable. Whenever an experience is interpreted or used as an example to support a proposition, these four questions were asked, and their answers at times appear in the interpretation.

Limitations of This Study

The limitations of this study are that it cannot be repeated and that the bulk of the data source comes from the author's memory, assisted by notes written directly after his release in March of 1973. Therefore, the chance of a forced or inappropriate interpretation is great. In an effort to reduce this limitation, an examination of every work published by former prisoners of war in the Vietnam War was made in order to consider different viewpoints. For example, Coker (1974) and Dramesi (1975) present different perspectives about the issue of escape. Since both men escaped from prisons in Hanoi and were recaptured, their opinions were valuable evidence and useful tools for looking at the organization of prisoners of war, the role of authority, and the function of communication. As Riley (1963, p. 72) has clearly stated, whenever the researcher takes a role in the organization, the risk of a biased viewpoint is present. Hence, the above methodological procedures were constructed to help reduce this risk.

Since exposure to the theoretical literature did

not precede the author's captivity, no hypotheses or propositions regarding communication or authority preceded the collection of the data. Thus, stimuli were received uninfluenced by rigid conceptualizations about organizational theory except those general notions inculcated through socialization processes of the United States culture and the United States Navy. According to McKenney and Keen (1974), this type of information gathering is "receptive" vice "preceptive" and carries the risk of failing "to shape detail into a coherent whole" (p. 81). Hence, the careful construction of a theoretical framework and the logical and consecutive reasoning of the case study approach was adopted in order to achieve a systematic overview of the organization. Although the formulation of analytical questions may reduce the chance of a hasty or inaccurate interpretation, the inherent problem of personal bias remains. Yet, the rigor of these questions which serve as a filter appears strong enough to increase the validity of each experience and subsequent analysis used in this research.

The limitations of the case study approach have been addressed in many sources concerning research design. Kerlinger (1973) stresses the inability to control variables and the lack of randomization. Riley

(1963) focuses on the control effect produced by the presence of the researcher and on the factor of personal bias. In extolling the virtue of the experimental method, Aronson (1972) distinguishes between mundane and experimental realism. Aronson (1972) contends that through good design and highly deceptive procedures, experiments can be so realistic that the subjects' response will be genuine (pp. 280-281). The primary advantage of this experimental approach is that the researcher can randomly assign subjects to the experimental and control groups. Although it is impossible to randomly assign the general population to the prisoner-of-war setting, some analysis of the sample is illuminating.

Most of the Americans captured and eventually released in the Vietnam War were officers. Rowen (1973) reports that of the total of 564 military men released, only 71 were enlisted personnel (p. 13). There were also 23 civilians released, but most of these men had had prior military service. A large proportion of the officers were involved in the flight of operational aircraft, while a majority of the enlisted men were a part of either helicopter or special forces operations. The point here is that the prisoners of war in Vietnam came from a unique and highly educated population--the career

military. However, the actual selection process of becoming a prisoner of war from this population appears to date to have been a random process because most aircraft in the Vietnam War were lost to barrage antiaircraft fire and indiscriminate small arms. Hence, an underlying assumption which has yet to be disproven is that the prisoners of war in the Vietnam War were randomly selected from a rather unique population of military career men.

Since the incarceration of the author was unplanned, the limitation of control effect also seems to be rather small. In the end, the major limitation of this study is the risk of personal bias leading to an inaccurate or forced interpretation in order to make a good fit to the existing body of theory. The theoretical framework and filter of methodological questions hopefully have enhanced the process and quality of evaluating the data. If this study can reveal the expectations and intentions of the prisoners of war in Hanoi in such a manner that one can gain insight into this unique experience without actually living it, then the quality of "mundane realism" may more than offset the limitations of personal bias, uniqueness of the population, and the chance of an inappropriate interpretation. The question which remains is: "What can insight into the prisoner-of-war organization

in Hanoi contribute to organizational theory?"

The Applicability of This Study

The ramifications of prison and hospital studies are many. However, does a sample drawn from such a population as a prison of criminals really apply to society at large? Although mental institutions and prisons consist of inmates rejected by society, scholars in the field of psychology and sociology have discovered concepts which apply to organizations as a whole. Goffman (1961) identifies common characteristics of "total institutions" which make them unique, but at the same time he also reveals how many aspects of life inside such an institution is like society in general (p. 4). McCleery (1968) hypothesizes one step further:

For the purposes of the study of relationships between communications and authority, the prison may be considered as a society in microcosm and a source of insights into the nature of power structures in other settings. (p. 117)

Since the population of prisoners of war was mostly composed of officers, the socioeconomic background and educational level of this group are far different than the criminal elements which make up American prisons. Hence, study of this organization and its communication system may be even more revealing than other empirical studies of total institutions. After all, it would be difficult to consider these men society rejects, or, on

the other hand, as any elite collection of heroes. In fact, the diversity and mixture of people in the prisoner-of-war camps of North Vietnam were immense. Dramesi (1975) describes the composition and activities of his group at Camp Unity:

Some were jumping, some were running in place, others were doing push-ups, and a small group practiced their handstands. The communicators were writing notes to be passed later in the day. And some scribbled on toilet paper preparing for the Spanish or French lessons.

John McCain shook his head saying, "The folks back home will never believe it!" For such a small group, the variety of ideas, activities, and personalities was fantastic. No two people did anything the same way.
(p. 218)

The significance of this pluralistic composition is that the American military career man is not so molded that he is extracted from the multiplicity of society itself. Indeed, the incidence of drug and alcohol abuse during the Vietnam War reflects just how pervasively the problems of society at large permeated the membership of the American Armed Forces. Nevertheless, this study refrains from making generalizations from the prisoner-of-war organization because the nature of the sample and the degree of stress could surely taint the conclusions. Moreover, such an endeavor is best left to the reader. Instead, this study seeks in the end to compare the experience to the developing trends in the field of organization theory.

Another implication of the stress involved in being a prisoner of war is that it tears away the façade of *polite* societal norms and exposes the individual to a "do-or-die" situation. Several studies of organized behavior in disaster support the value of such a study in that people react differently under stress (Barton, 1969; Dynes, 1970). R. Clarkson, a leading photojournalist, recently explained his concentration on athletic events:

Shooting sports is an attempt to get behind the scenes to see what happens when tension invades people. Like politics, sports throw people into an adverse situation. There's so much more than the action and spectacle. (Tharp, 1976, p. 15)

In the same vein there is much more to the experience of being a prisoner of war than the smoke and the pain; there is an incredible amount of tension between two unattractive alternatives: to resist and organize, or to obey the North Vietnamese. The fact that more than several bodies of former prisoners of war were returned to the United States by the North Vietnamese is evidence alone that the costs of resistance could ultimately be death. The point here is that the findings of empirical research and theoretical concepts about organizations can be most applicable and useful in understanding the attitudes and behaviors of American prisoners of war who lived constantly under threat of torture. With such an insight, the circumstances of the prisoner-of-war

organization may be seen in a larger organizational context in which such conditions as torture may be viewed as another form of stress, similar to the fear of failure in executives or the fear of being dismissed among labor forces. No matter what the stress, organizations seek means to alleviate and accommodate tensions in order to maintain some equilibrium. The prisoner-of-war organization in North Vietnam was no exception, and that is what this discourse is all about.

Chapter 4

COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AND FUNCTIONS

The essence of every organization is its social system which Caplow (1964) defines as "a set of persons with an identifying characteristic plus a set of relationships established among these persons by interaction" (p. 1). Thus, people alone are like fence posts and when they become part of a social system, the series of interactions serve as the rails of the fence. It is the joining of the posts and rails that gives the fence its boundary, structure, and ultimately clues to its functions. Hence, it is appropriate to begin a study of organization with a description of the social system. This chapter describes in detail three prisons in North Vietnam, analyzes the structure of these prisons, and builds an interpretation of the functions of the prisoner-of-war organization in these prisons.

Little Vegas: 1969-1970

By 1969 the organization of prisoners in Little Vegas was very developed. Located in the northeast corner of the central prison (Hoa Lo) of Hanoi, Little Vegas consisted of the highest ranking officers, several junior hard-core officers who had either escaped or been

caught in providing resistance leadership, and four men who had been captured in Laos. Most of these men lived in pairs, but some individuals remained in solitary confinement. With the exception of two prisoners, every member had nearly two years or more of prison life, and many had over four years of prison experience. Hence, by the start of 1970, the membership of this prison was a well seasoned group, highly proficient in tap code, and very creative in designing new communication methods such as hand codes and vocal codes. In short, the prison was extremely well organized with every man at least knowing the other prisoners and their location in the camp. Moreover, some of the men had a background on others and thus carried firm sentiments (some positive and some negative) about other members.

The camp was divided into three large subunits: Thunderbird, Desert Inn, and Stardust. The former formed the northern boundary of the prison while the latter two comprised the eastern wing. Three other small subunits existed and were named Golden Nugget, the Mint, and Riviera. The latter was used for guardrooms, interrogations, and occasionally punishment cells. Figure 3 gives a detailed presentation of the layout of this prison. Within each subunit, communication was conducted by tap code at one-hour periods following lunch and supper.

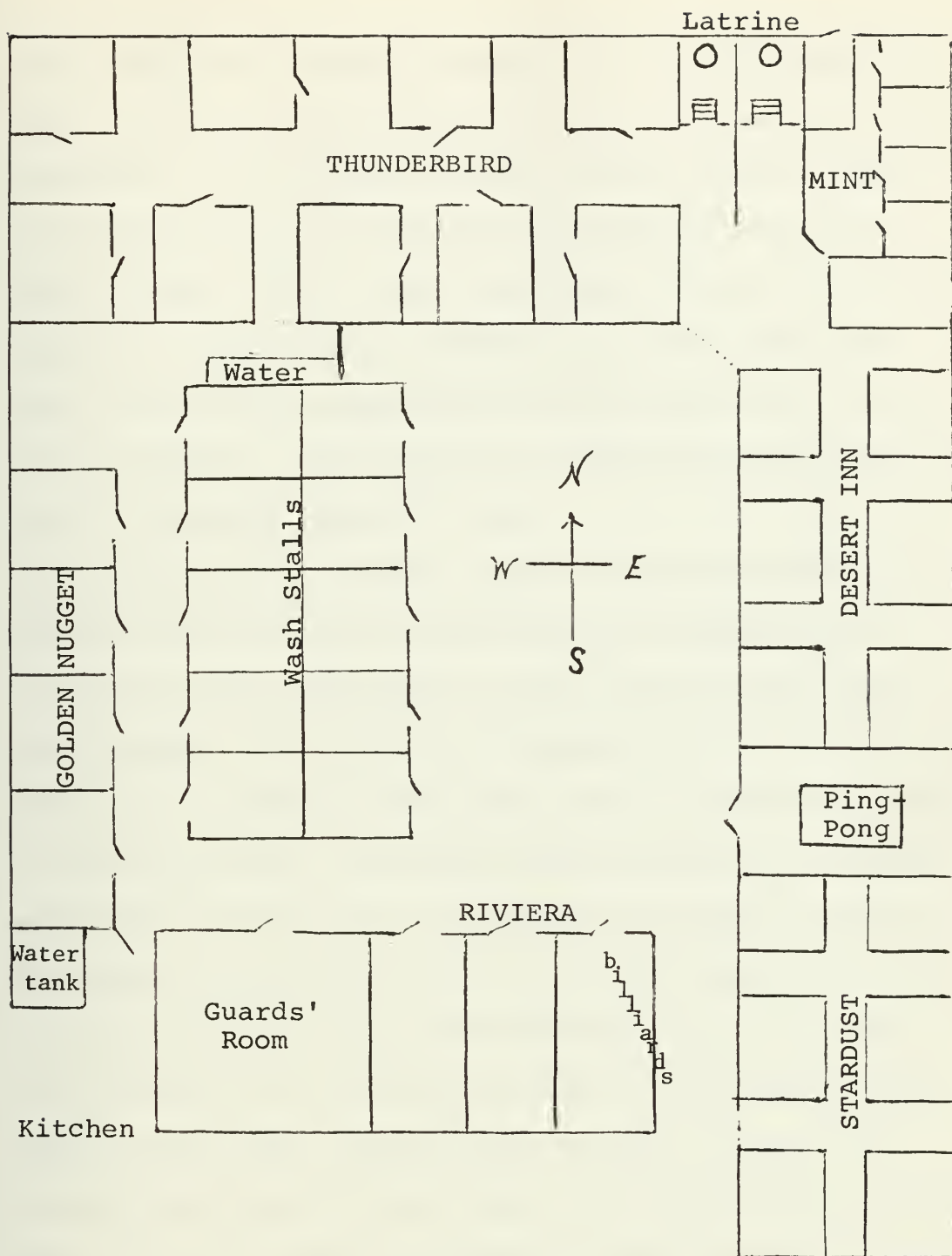


Figure 3

Map of Little Vegas

These times were chosen because most of the guards ate then and few were left to monitor the passageways in the cellblocks. Lookout was accomplished by peeking under the cell doors at each end of a passageway (McGrath, 1975, p. 33). When a guard approached, the lookout would thump the wall in such a manner that ears on the wall could hear but the approaching guard could not. In most of the subunits, the pattern of communication was similar to a "Y" pattern (Leavitt, 1958).

Communication between subunits was more difficult and infrequent than the intracellblock communication. Note drops were established in the latrine areas where feces buckets were dumped and cleaned at the start of each day. Because of the fetid odor and unpleasant slime in these latrines, the guards had the habit of standing back from the dimly lit proceedings of bucket-cleaning and rarely inspected the area. Another common place to exchange notes and verbal information was in the wash stalls where men from the Thunderbird and Golden Nugget used the west side and men from the Mint, Desert Inn, and Stardust used the east side. Finally, when prisoners were allowed to use the Ping-Pong table between the Stardust and Desert Inn in the spring of 1970 and a Vietnamese version of billiards in the Riviera, note drops were made in the tables, holes in the walls, and other

cracks and crannies. In this way, each subunit could gather information and report to the subunit with the SRO, and in turn the SRO could issue policy orders to each subunit which would disseminate the orders within its cellblock.

In early 1970, the pattern of communication in Little Vegas was an all-channel network (Guetzkow & Simon, 1955). A number of individuals wrote notes to several prisoners in separate cells within the same cellblock. Thus, there arose a prolific correspondence with notes even in rafters of the wash stalls. The abundance of notes led to detection and resulted in personal searches when prisoners went to and from the wash areas. Moreover, the discovery of a note in code during May of 1970, when the Vietnamese were already suspicious of intracamp organization, forced the Vietnamese to take more action in preventing communication (Dramesi, 1975, p. 179). Thus, a system was developed in which one man within each subunit would write the notes to other cellblocks. Moreover, some efforts were made to keep all notes flowing to and from the subunit with the SRO. For example, if the SRO was located in the Thunderbird, the Stardust sent and received notes only from the Thunderbird. If the Stardust wanted to pass a note to the Golden Nugget, the men in the Thunderbird could act as a

relay, but this type of communication was discouraged. Such an intracamp pattern closely resembled the wheel pattern (Leavitt, 1958).

The nature of the information passed at Little Vegas can be divided into four general categories: communication procedures, resistance policy, current events, and entertainment such as jokes or short stories. Since the system was well developed, little time was spent on setting up additional communication procedures. However, a few plans were promulgated in case of an emergency or contingent upon some unusual torture. For example, if a guard began some type of punishment on his own, the prisoner was to yell "Bao, Bao Cao!" The normal method for requesting attention was to report "Bao Cao" to the guard who was supposed to summon an officer or interpreter. This signal was modified by the additional "Bao" and when heard, this cry of "Bao, Bao Cao!" was to be continued by every prisoner at full volume. In this way the attention of the Vietnamese administration could have been quickly focused on unauthorized behavior by guards. Conditions by 1970 were such that this procedure was never used at Little Vegas, but the knowledge of this ability for a unified stand in the face of some emergency was a comfort to many prisoners.

The content of resistance policy and orders in 1970

was varied and in some areas difficult to implement. The North Vietnamese were intent on using the prisoner of war as a political tool. Some prisoners were tortured into making tape-recorded letters to their friends in an effort to encourage Americans in the field of battle to refuse to fight. Others were forced to make "war crime" confessions. Still others were coerced into memorizing answers to be repeated before delegations of American war protesters visiting North Vietnam. Lieutenant Commander D. W. Hoffman, in testimony before the House Committee on Internal Security on May 9, 1973, revealed how he was forced to meet Jane Fonda and how the North Vietnamese skillfully used his injuries to apply the needed pain for his motivation to do and say what he did not really believe (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Internal Security, *Hearings*, pp. 6-7, 18-19). In 1970, the standing SRO policy at Little Vegas was to avoid aiding the North Vietnamese propaganda effort but to protect yourself from serious injury. The senior officers intended to provide by their example and encouragement the incentive to survive in adverse conditions without compromising the war effort. A common interpretation of SRO intentions regarding resistance was: "Say no, but say it with a smile and don't let them break your bones."

In the spring of 1970, the North Vietnamese forced

prisoners to make tape recordings espousing the Communist view of the news. This version was then broadcast to all prisoners in their cells. The POW communication system was then employed to spread orders--first to those men who were *not* making tapes directing them to refuse tape recording if the North Vietnamese asked them to join this effort; and secondly, to make obvious mistakes and mispronunciations to those prisoners who had been forced to make tape recordings. Soon the broadcasts were filled with references to Senators "Halfbright" and "May Govern" which provided many prisoners with some comic relief. The pace of the resistance, however, quickened. The SRO ordered all prisoners to stop *any* tape recording, writing, and any other activities which could be utilized for propaganda. In addition, procedures were established for a unified hunger strike to protest the remaining solitary prisoners with no cellmates. Selected senior officers were to make this point for group living, while the majority of the men was to give the excuse that they did not feel well or were not hungry. In May of 1970, just when Dramesi had been caught with a coded note, the hunger strike was implemented. The result of the strike left more men in solitary confinement than before the strike and created an intense anticomunication drive by the North Vietnamese. Nevertheless, in June and July,

the routine of the prison was changed, and one cell was permitted to wash, exercise, and visit with the men from another cell. Thus, the dyad relationships of each cell in 1970 slowly began to expand to four and six-member groups.

Since little news had reached the prisoners of Little Vegas since 1968, the author's arrival in late 1969 was the source of much information on the lunar landing, sports, impact of the Miranda decision, elections of 1968, and other not-so-current events. In fact, in early 1970 there was such a need to share this information that communication gave the author a sense of purpose. The author and his cellmate spent long hours at night writing notes on toilet paper to be passed the next day and read as a newspaper named the "Vegas Gambler" (Rowen, 1973, pp. 91-92). Yet, as larger groups of prisoners were allowed to visit each other, fewer stories of current events and entertainment were passed from subunit to subunit. The issues of active versus passive resistance and reports from interrogations were emphasized. Meanwhile, within the enlarging cells entertainment conversations such as the recounting in detail of films or novels flourished. This trend toward intergroup communication focusing on resistance policy and intragroup communication emphasizing entertainment

continued in Camp Unity into 1971.

Although the North Vietnamese were constantly devising new ways to prevent prisoner communication, their own efforts often facilitated the prisoners' communication system. For instance, every six to nine months the North Vietnamese would reshuffle all the prisoners. Hence, news was transferred between prisons. Moreover, within each prison there were sporadic and frequent moves which furthered the dispersal of information and did not seriously disrupt communication. After the first meal in a new cell, a prisoner would listen very carefully for a series of coughs and throat noises which would signal all clear to communicate. Then, upon first contact, the new prisoner would identify himself, establish his voice call-up signal, and thus become a part of the subunit.

The most noted example of how the North Vietnamese unwittingly aided prisoner communication occurred in Little Vegas in March of 1970. Several times, prisoners had been caught talking through the drains in the wash area. From the increase of refusals to participate in prison activities, the North Vietnamese suspected resistance orders were being passed and they took measures to stop all communication in the bath stalls. The solid doors were horizontally cut in half; when the prisoners

were washing, the top part of the door remained open. A guard was stationed in the passageway in front of the stalls so that he could hear and see the proceedings. However, the guard usually sat on a stool and only listened for talking. Meanwhile, those prisoners in the Golden Nugget could watch every move in the wash stalls and could transmit to observant prisoners in the wash stalls by passing a hand by a hole in the bottom of the door. In turn, the washing prisoner could transfer much information by use of a hand code which McGrath (1975, p. 49) has illustrated. A very robust activity sprung up; and when prisoners from the Stardust began to wash on the west side of the bathstalls, messages could be circulated to the entire camp from the Golden Nugget. In this way, changes by the North Vietnamese aided communication integration and also increased the speed by which information could be passed from one end of the prison to the other. Men in the Golden Nugget at this time were in a position similar to the central person in the wheel pattern in Leavitt's experimental work (1958).

Camp Unity: 1971

Christmas of 1970 brought a new condition to the men of Little Vegas. Over forty of its members were moved to the central part of the prison (Hoa Lo) and placed in one large cell (Dramesi, 1975, p. 190).

Prisons in other parts of Hanoi were consolidated in a similar fashion. McGrath (1975) and many other prisoners felt the raid on Son Tay was the cause of this centralization of prisoners. However, one exception to group living was the isolated northwest corner of Hoa Lo where four colonels, four Americans captured in Laos, and three prisoners from Thailand were located. These men were separated into pairs and shared a cell seven feet long and ten feet wide. Metal stocks were a permanent part of each concrete slab which served as a bed. The four Americans captured in Laos were allowed to wash together and exercise in the small enclosed courtyard outside the entrance to their cellblock (see Figure 4). During one of these exercise periods, the one guard was distracted in the courtyard by two prisoners while E. Brace talked to the colonels and the author maintained lookout for Brace. In this way, the highest ranking prisoners of war in Hanoi were first contacted at Camp Unity.

During other exercise periods, Brace found that a board on the east wall opened to a large cell of Americans which later was numbered Cell #1. Brace was able to set up communication procedures after lunch and dinner when the dishes were to be washed for the cellblock. In addition, notes were to be exchanged through the board

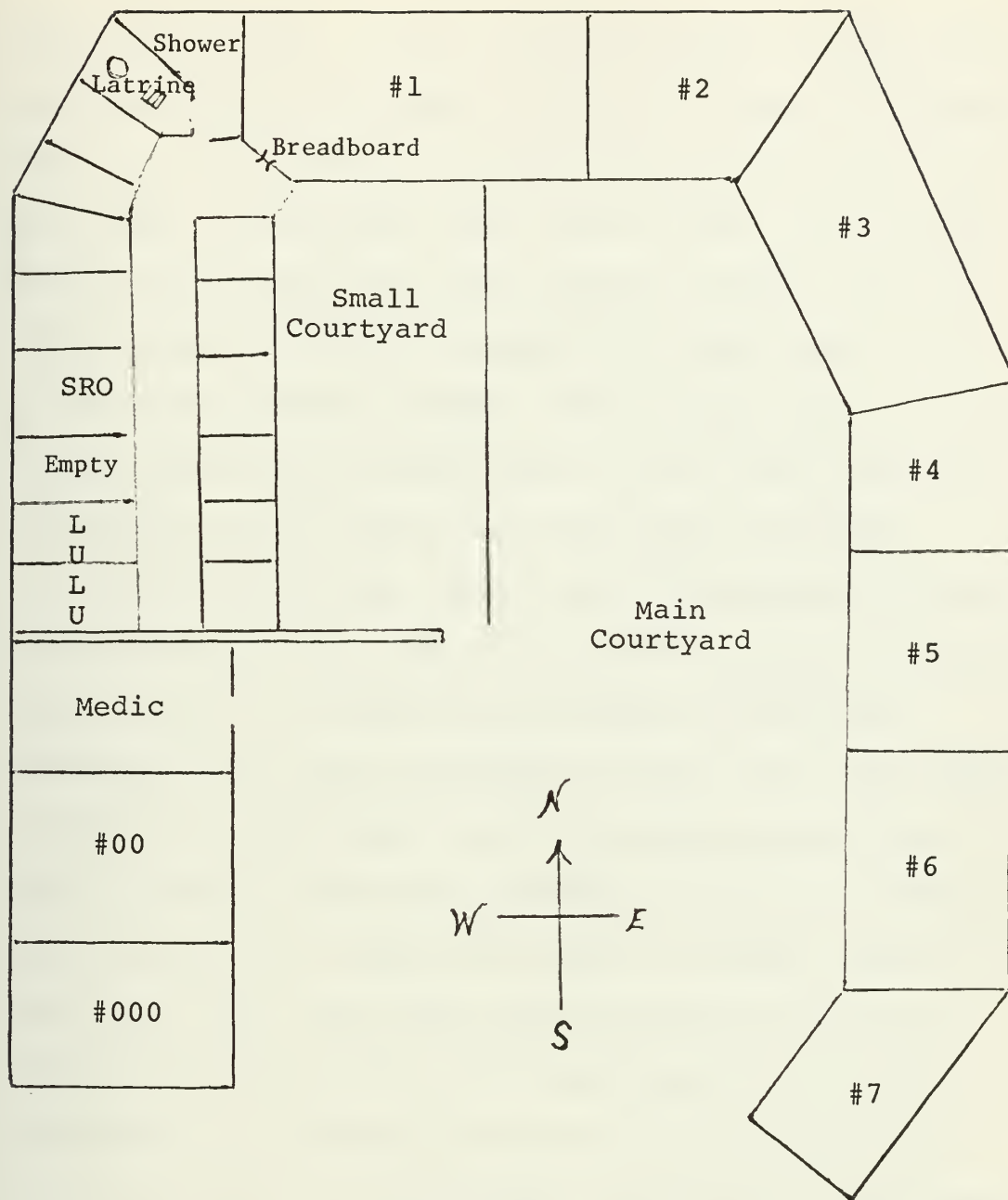


Figure 4

Map of Camp Unity

and over the wall. In the other direction, voice communication through the rear windows was quickly established since we could hear the 19 men calling "Good night" to each other at the quiet time before sleep. This group, known later as #00, had come from the prison known as the Zoo and contained E. Alvarez, the first American to be captured in North Vietnam. Their membership was relatively young and contained some enlisted men; they were attempting to hold their own group Sunday services.

The dialogue which began with the colonels reveals the increasing significance of communications on resistance. Since the colonels were closely watched and threatened with harsh punishment if they were ever caught communicating, the great bulk of communication effort fell on the four Americans captured in Laos, who became known as LULU, the Legendary Union of Laotian Unfortunates. In fact, this LULU group became the colonels' only communications link with the prison. The North Vietnamese were extremely conscious of military rank, and experiences at Little Vegas confirmed that punishment for higher ranking officers was always more severe than punishment for junior officers. In this setting, the military adage "RHIP" ("Rank Has Its Privileges") could also stand for "Rank Has Its Pain"; and these colonels wanted to use every resource within their means to

implement resistance without being detected.

The content of intercell communication stressed various issues of resistance. Questions from Cell #00 centered at first on the issue of a possible early release. Nine American prisoners of war had already been released by the North Vietnamese, but the deliberately misleading impressions from these releases made the North Vietnamese appear to be following at least the general spirit of the Geneva Convention's guidelines for treatment of prisoners of war. Some prisoners viewed these releases as a form of parole which the Code of Conduct explicitly forbid. In any case, such releases were seen by most prisoners as a pardon, or at least as a "special favor" (McCain, 1973, p. 50). Because E. Alvarez had already been a prisoner for almost seven years at this time, his companions wanted some SRO policy which would condone, support, or in any way morally justify an early release for him. At least one dozen questions concerning aspects of this issue were directed toward the SRO, but the ultimate result remained the same as before: the order of "No early or special release" was again issued.

In contrast to Cell #00, information from Cell #1 and other cells in that direction concerned resistance. The men in these cells appeared to be divided into two

poles of thought concerning the organizational goals of prisoners of war. At one extreme, there was a handful of "hard-core" resisters who went out of their way to resist and cause the North Vietnamese problems. Suggestions for psychological warfare teams to harass guards and make plans for massive escape attempts (Dramesi, 1975) were proposed. Ultimately these men wanted to command respect from the North Vietnamese and force them into adherence to the 1948 Geneva Convention's rules for treatment of prisoners of war. On the other side, there were many who wanted to survive in order to eventually go home again. They did not want to make propaganda for the enemy but reasoned that such writing and tape recording were of little practical use. Moreover, they perceived the costs of refusal (beatings with rubber hoses, strap and bar torture, and/or isolation in leg irons) to be too high. Essentially, these men saw the guidelines of the Geneva Convention as an unreachable yet attractive ideal; in the end, they wanted just to be left alone to enjoy the opportunity of group living which had so recently been gained.

The issues of resistance were so complex that the colonels could not formulate a policy which could be easily transmitted through the present communication chain. Even a lengthy note passed from one cell to

another would have left many contingencies uncovered. Thus, the SRO supported each cellblock commander and officially endorsed the organization already adopted by the cell which formerly occupied Little Vegas. These men had employed the Air Force flight system wherein four men served as a flight, one of whom was the leader. The flight leaders in turn were responsible to the most senior man in the cell who had a small staff to support him (Dramesi, 1975, p. 192). In addition to supporting this type of military table of organization, the SRO gave "authority and responsibility" to each cell's commander to make decisions as he saw fit. In this way, the SRO was trying to create enough autonomy so that if or when intercell communication was interrupted, general organization and resistance would continue.

The pattern of the communication in this prison was at first a chain (Leavitt, 1958). Cell #2 could communicate with only its neighbors, Cells #1 and #3. Later, the communications team in each cell attempted to create a common note drop so that the pattern could resemble an all-channel network (Guetzkow & Simon, 1955). A significant aspect of these patterns was the specialization within each cell; each flight had its own area of endeavor. Hence, the few men concerned with communications reported to the cell commander who in turn would

pass the word to the flight leaders. Such a hierarchy put heavy emphasis on the higher ranking officers.

On February 10, 1971, a disturbance erupted over the question of religious services in Cell #7. When the North Vietnamese removed several leaders from Cell #7, a shout and chorus of "God Bless America" broke the quiet of the prison. Later that evening, this chorus of "God Bless America" erupted again and unified the entire camp in song. Then a more blatant display of organization was demonstrated by a round robin chant. Cell #7 began with "This is seven! This is seven! Where in hell is number six?" The chant was passed all the way around the prison where it ended with Cell #000, not #0 as erroneously reported by Dramesi (1975, p. 210). This last cell was particularly significant because it contained most of the prisoners who were still making tape recordings and writing propaganda for the North Vietnamese.

The North Vietnamese response to this riot was immediate and effective. First, the sound system was activated at full volume with Vietnamese music. In the middle of the night, the four Americans captured in Laos (LULU) were removed from Hanoi to solitary, rat-infested cells in an Army camp west of the city. The next morning the senior men in each cell were isolated, interrogated, and punished. A prolonged communications purge had

begun (Dramesi, 1975, p. 211).

Plantation: 1971-1972

Adapted to use as a prison, the Plantation up to 1969 was the staging area for North Vietnamese releases of prisoners of war. The camp was divided into three main units--the Gunshed to the south, the Warehouse to the west, and the Corncrib to the north. Figure 5 depicts the detailed layout of this prison. In 1971, the North Vietnamese moved Americans captured in South Vietnam, mostly during the Hué Offensive in 1968, to the Plantation. The four Americans captured in Laos plus a new member captured in February of 1971 were moved to the Plantation in July of 1971. This LULU group was separated into pairs and isolated in the Gunshed where they contacted Lieutenant Colonel Guy by tapping on walls. Colonel Guy reported that the camp was composed mostly of enlisted men who were "afraid" to communicate, and thus there was very low morale here. Shortly afterward, Brace and the author when washing were able to talk to some prisoners in the north end. According to these men, the camp was divided in half, with good communications at the north end of the Warehouse and the Corncrib, but no communication from the south end of camp. They warned us about one group whom they labeled "turncoats and traitors" because in the past they had

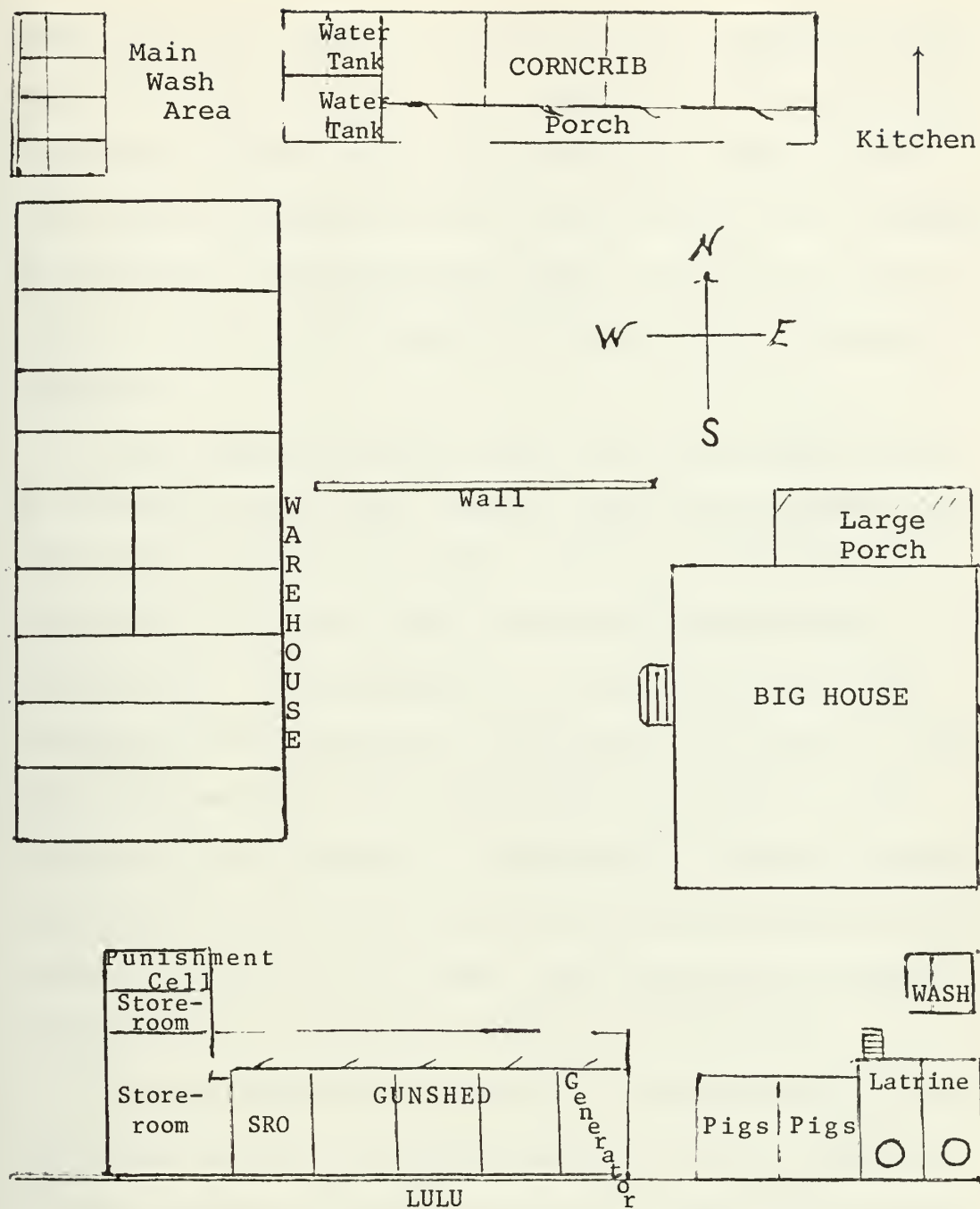


Figure 5

Map of the Plantation

reported to the Communists any prisoner communications which they had observed. One member of this group had reportedly singled out a sergeant whom he had served with before incarceration and called him a "war criminal." The sergeant had subsequently been punished for over a year by solitary confinement in stocks and occasional beatings.

LULU's past experience was immediately put to use to establish note drops, connect the camp, and unify it under the command of the SRO. However, the North Vietnamese went to a great deal of work to prevent such organization. The prisoners in the Gunshed were soon prohibited from washing at the north end of camp. A new wash area was built with tar paper and bamboo at the south end by the pigpens. Nevertheless, all the buckets were dumped in the latrine at the south end since it was the only latrine in the camp. Note drops were established in this area and the adjacent wash shed.

The most difficult contact in establishing campwide communication was in reaching members of the south end of the Warehouse without the antiwar group's discovering the interaction. The ancient Christian sign of the fish was drawn on a brick in the wash area with a piece of limestone. The next day a smiling face appeared on the fish. So, a general note, not identifying the author,

was written and placed under the brick the following day. Instructions for future notes were given, especially the need to wrap notes in plastic and bury them in the mud beneath the brick. The following day the note was gone and two days later, per instructions, we found a detailed note wrapped in plastic and buried in the mud. Such was the "technology" employed to construct what was perhaps the safest mailbox in North Vietnam. Later, searches and communication purges uncovered many communication methods and notedrops, but this particular mailbox remained undetected until it was destroyed when the wash shed was dismantled.

In only a few months, the Plantation was organized under Lieutenant Colonel Guy's authority as SRO. The enlisted troops enjoyed his code name, Hawk, and at times expended much effort in surreptitiously saluting his room. Occasionally several privates shouted encouragement to others so that the men in the Gunshed knew they were all getting the welcomed word to resist. The North Vietnamese also felt the increasing resistance as more and more prisoners became sullen in interrogations and refused to make any tape recordings.

Then, during some Christmas festivities when one room played a staged basketball game with the antiwar group, a naïve gesture was made to a member of the

antiwar group to join the prisoners' organization. The exchange of notes in feces buckets and in the latrine was explained to prove that the prisoners really were organized and wanted this "wayward" group to regain a resistance posture. The one problem with this gesture was that no one else knew about it until the next day. Early in the morning, after Colonel Guy had delivered a note, a force of guards with face masks emerged from the Big House. The bucket-dumping brigade from the north end was intercepted and searched on the spot. Meanwhile, two guards went to the latrine and returned in about one minute with Colonel Guy's note. In this way, the communication purge of 1972 began and resulted in torture and isolation for the SRO.

Although the above incident was the most serious compromise witnessed of any communication system, communication continued in the note drop under the brick. Moreover, a new method of placing notes in loaves of bread was discovered, and this resulted in a backup method of communicating from the south Warehouse to the Gunshed. When Colonel Guy was returned to his old cell in the Gunshed, his pain, broken teeth, and battered legs were clearly evident. Yet, he did not order all communication to stop. Instead, he ordered us to continue and to disregard the tape recording the North Vietnamese

had forced him to make. This tape recording was played to the senior man of each cell and basically said that the only "*authority*" in this prison lay in the North Vietnamese camp commander; all prisoners were to obey the "camp regulations" and the "camp commander." At the same time, tar paper screens were erected in the large courtyard so that visibility from and to the Gunshed was eliminated. The year 1972 saw reduced intergroup communication, but communication was never completely stopped and its content continued to focus on resistance policy. By 1972, most of the prisoners knew the name of every man in the Plantation and were aware of the SRO's policy concerning resistance efforts.

The most demoralizing aspect of 1972 was to see the rewards given to the antiwar group. Beer and powdered milk were given to this group once a week but not to other prisoners. On weekdays the antiwar group was permitted to exercise outdoors for most of the day. After the communication purge, no spontaneous overtures to include this antiwar group in the prison organization were made, but several prisoners joined their group and their antiwar activities. With each new addition to the antiwar group, it was necessary to establish a new mailbox in the latrine; and the system functioned without interruption. The significance here is that communica-

tion in and of itself was a necessity, not just for military resistance which was definitely enhanced by organization and SRO leadership, but also for human existence. Man is a social animal, and no matter what costs are imposed on building a social system, man will build.

The Functions of Communication

As indicated above, the primary function which the communication system served was to build an interaction network between individuals and groups. "It was essential for everyone to know what was happening in camp, whether the news was about a new torture or just a friendly word of encouragement to a fellow POW" (McGrath, 1975, p. 34). Coker contends that "communications kept us together in spirit and determination and allowed us to get home alive, in good shape, with our mentalities intact" (1974, p. 42). In short, interaction through communication served to reinforce each prisoner's belief in his own human worth, a belief which the North Vietnamese tried to undermine in many ways (such as forcing the prisoners to bow from the waist). Keve (1974) describes this quality of communication as follows:

It is a qualitative condition that is composed only partly of the exchange of information, and more importantly is a sharing of presence, and mood, and feeling. It is a thing of gestures, glances, caresses, and even shared silences.

It is this poignant togetherness and nonverbal touching of the spirits that constitute the real quality and need of communication, whether or not any substantive information is exchanged.
(p. 34)

Such a definition of communication comes closest to describing the primary function and need of a communication system in a prison. But what explains the great length to which prisoners would go to build communications and help other prisoners?

Aronson (1972) suggests two variables which might explain why individuals come to the aid of strangers in distress: the feeling of mutuality or "common fate" and the absence of escape from the immediate situation (p. 42). Both of these variables applied to conditions at Little Vegas and explain the cohesiveness and willingness of prisoners to help one another. Yet the most significant of these two variables was the feeling of sharing a common misfortune. There was a definite sense of community remarkably close to Tönnies' concept of *Gemeinschaft* as developed by Nisbet (1966, pp. 74-82). Being a prisoner of war was not an association in Vietnam; rather it was the forced union of hearts, minds, and bodies into one family of misfortune.

On a personal basis, communication provided a prisoner the resources to overcome periods of depression and doubt. Coker (1974) reports that after a torture

session, it was common to sink into self-pity and remorse. The man in the next cell then would devote his total day's effort to lifting up his fallen comrade. Such an effort was really an exchange in that the helping prisoner not only gained a sense of purpose in the otherwise squalid boredom of a nothing routine, but also established a mutual debt on the other prisoner to return the help if the encourager were to experience depression or torture in the future. Thus, the psychological impact of this communication was a two-way process or an exchange. The depressed prisoner gained encouragement and belief in his own human worth. The helping prisoner achieved a sense of purpose, a meaning in life, and built a potential reservoir of help for a future time when he would need encouragement. In this way, the communication system provided the strength of a confirmation group as outlined in Schein (1969, p. 100).

A secondary function of communication was to establish a united resistance posture. The exchange of information often gave prisoners a means for anticipating questions in an upcoming interrogation. For example, in 1970 the North Vietnamese began a program to get each prisoner to write about Mother's Day in order to test the resolution of the prisoner organization. The SRO's order was explicit: "Write nothing for the North

Vietnamese." When interrogators could not obtain written material, some individuals were threatened with torture but did not write and were not tortured. The word that these men succeeded gave strength to those who were later threatened with isolation and punishment. In this way, the exchange of information allowed the less successful resisters to achieve higher levels of resistance. In the words of Coker (1974), "Communication allowed the weaker PW's to draw strength and guidance from the stronger" (p. 43).

The exchange of information also helped resistance in that it provided alternative methods. Some prisoners found it always best to say "No" to North Vietnamese requests. Others were successful by using some deception. Still other prisoners played the role of incompetents and made such a mess with the ink or tape machine that the North Vietnamese were only too happy to send the spastic prisoner back to his cell. In the summer of 1970, the author and his cellmate, E. Brace, were assigned the job of moving some long bamboo poles. There were many screens erected behind which other prisoners were walking and exercising. Brace and the author were to place the poles along one such screen. The author, being of slender build and weighing at that time about 125 pounds, immediately began an act of grunting and

groaning when lifting. Prisoners nearby heard and chuckled over the guard's futile efforts to keep him quiet. Then with one pole in the air like a flagpole, the author began to sway and teeter under the pretended weight. Even the guard began to laugh, but when the pole crashed against several screens and flattened them, the prisoners stood face to face and exchanged greetings. The guard went berserk, and all the prisoners started pointing at the "heavy" pole. When the Vietnamese officer tried to untangle the incident, he concluded that the author and his cellmate were just not competent enough to perform the simplest of tasks. Here was a place that the apparent lack of talent could be a great asset; the exchange of such information was valuable knowledge.

The emphasis of communication was placed first on the primary function of providing human interaction. Isolated and alone, a prisoner could reach to his neighbor to gain confidence and reassurance. As individuals were placed into larger groups, the content of inter-group communication shifted increasingly from personal support to the issues surrounding resistance. As previously noted, Dramesi (1975) stressed the question of escape. On the other hand, Coker (1974) raised the perplexing problem of how the North Vietnamese tried to

weaken the prisoners' resistance by placing poor resisters in charge of junior men who had resisted well in the past. The isolation of senior resisters placed even more stress on the emphasis given to resistance policy.

The significant point of this shift in emphasis of organizational communication is that changes in structure shifted the function of communication between subunits. Such a finding is contrary to studies concerning union leadership structure in which a one-way relationship was presented as "functions determine the structure" (Tannenbaum, 1968, p. 31). In the prisoner-of-war organization, changes in structure by the North Vietnamese shifted the focus of organizational goals and thus resulted in growing emphasis on resistance policy.

In short, changes in structure of the prisoner-of-war organization caused changes in the organization's functions. In the studies of union leadership, labor always could control its structure. But in the prisoner-of-war situation, structure was often decided by the North Vietnamese, and the organization of prisoners had to work around structural conditions. As more and more prisoners were permitted to live in one cell together, intercell communication shifted from personal support and entertainment to issues of how to best resist the North Vietnamese. Thus, in this case, structure did

determine functions of the organization. What were the key variables which influenced and at times controlled resistance policy and prisoners' behavior? The next two chapters attempt to identify and analyze the most significant variables on the behavior and attitudes of prisoners of war within their covert organization.

Chapter 5

THE ROLE OF AUTHORITY

Authority per se is a diverse and fascinating area to study. It can be approached in many ways, as shown in Chapter 2. The author's experiences in Hanoi led him to clearly distinguish between the man and the authority of his rank. Although there are several methods which could be used to explore this difference (French & Raven, 1969; Homans, 1950; and Peabody, 1964), the concept of role theory seems most useful since it often is so easy to separate an actor from the role he or she is playing. Katz and Kahn (1966) lend support to this emphasis by their contention that the concept of role is "the building block of social systems and the summation of the requirements with which the system confronts the individual" (p. 171). Katz and Kahn (1966, p. 187) present an elaborate model of role theory in which organizational factors, personality, and interpersonal skills are viewed as inputs to a role sender. The role sender takes his role expectations and sends role behaviors to focal persons who in turn receive the role and display an end behavior. This process they define as a "role episode" (p. 182). This chapter seeks to show how the

command structure of the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi can be described and analyzed in terms of the Katz and Kahn model (1966, p. 187). From this description, an interpretation of the level of control within the organization will be made. Incidents of role conflict will be explored from cognitive dissonance theory and from the concept of uncertainty in an effort not only to understand deviance from the organizational norms, but also to gain insight into the range of obedience.

Role Expectations

Before the United States was even formed, a traditional expectation or ideal of prisoner-of-war behavior was established by the example of Nathan Hale. Caught by the British, this Revolutionary War officer was hung as a spy and according to legend, he gave no information to the British except his well-known last words of "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country" (Coker, 1974, p. 44). Throughout the history of the United States, custom grew that prisoners of war were to resist and escape if possible. No formal code or process of formal training for prisoners of war existed (*The Armed Forces Officer*, 1960, p. 24). Instead, the social order was a product of ongoing human activity which included not only the actions of prisoners of war but also the legends, mythology, and gossip surrounding

those actions. Berger and Luckmann (1967) best describe such a social construction:

Social order exists *only* as a product of human activity. No other ontological status may be ascribed to it without hopelessly obfuscating its empirical manifestations. Both in its genesis (social order is the result of past human activity) and its existence in any instant of time (social order exists only and insofar as human activity continues to produce it), it is a human product. (p. 52)

The experiences of prisoners of war in the Korean War proved that human activity no longer could informally produce the expected behavior without some type of internal organization. The Code of Conduct, a formal statement of expected behavior for American prisoners of war, was written and promulgated as Executive Order #10631 in 1955 (see appendix). One significant aspect of this development was that instead of being a legal standard such as the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Code of Conduct stood as a *moral* code. It was the prescribed behavior for all American fighting men who were captured.

In essence, the Code of Conduct states that an American fighting man will not quit and if captured, he will hold his honor high by keeping faith in his God and country. If captured, he will not make any statements which could harm his country, its allies, or his fellow prisoners of war. Instead, he will resist, attempt

escape, and keep faith with his fellow prisoners of war. Most significant of all, if senior in rank he will take command; and if not, he will obey the "lawful orders" of those in command. Hence, this moral code in clear and concise terms provided a legitimatization of the authority of rank into the prisoner-of-war situation. Although the genesis of military authority in the prisoner-of-war camp lies now in the Code of Conduct, its continued existence lies in the effort and work of human production. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), the reality could not exist on the expectation alone, but required ongoing human activity. Such activity falls into the process of role sending.

The Role Sent

In 1955, the signing of the Executive Order on the Code of Conduct had to be given the widest dissemination as possible. A program was set up to display the six articles of the Code of Conduct on six separate posters which carried an illustration depicting an appropriate action with the words of the article in clear and large print across the face of the picture. These pictures were (and still are) displayed in mess hall entrances, hallways, and other highly trafficked areas. They serve as a visual affirmation of a value for the expected behavior if captured. In addition to this dissemination,

the armed forces carefully examined their socialization processes and added the Code of Conduct to their training efforts.

The abundance of scholarly articles and works dealing with socialization processes is too rich to review in this study. Caplow (1964) seems to have clearly defined the concept in organizational terms as follows:

The organizationally directed process that prepares and qualifies individuals to occupy organizational positions is called *socialization*. It may be visualized as continuous since the behaviors appropriate to an organizational position are not acquired once and for all when the position is assumed, but are learned and relearned throughout the length of a career. (p. 169)

The significance of this definition is that socialization is an ongoing process and does not simply end at the conclusion of some training or indoctrination course. Caplow (1964, pp. 172-178) identifies ten modes of socialization such as training, schooling, and anticipatory socialization. In regard to the Code of Conduct, the military placed heavy emphasis on the learning of principles in recruit and officer candidate training. Moreover, specific schools were created to give soldiers and airmen facing the highest risk of becoming captured a chance to experience simulated conditions of captivity; mortification was a mode used in this phase. The purpose of this intensive training was to seriously challenge

each individual's values so that he would be better equipped to face a more serious attack in a prisoner-of-war situation. As Aronson (1972) suggests, "the person who is easiest to 'brainwash' is the person whose ideas about Americanism are based on slogans that have never been seriously challenged" (p. 83). After initial training and schooling, the Code of Conduct was periodically reviewed and discussed at meetings in each operating unit. All these efforts were clearly aimed at instilling the values of the Code of Conduct in each American fighting man. However, if one remembers Caplow's (1964) definition of socialization, one can see that this process would continue in the actual prisoner-of-war setting by the ongoing production of internal organization. In short, once the role is sent, it cries out for continual reinforcement and reception within the focal person.

Role Reception

Notwithstanding the expectations and socialization surrounding the prisoner-of-war role, one never fully anticipates or plans on being captured. The wide majority of men encountered never paid close attention to the probabilities of becoming a prisoner of war but assumed the chances to be so low as to be truly irrelevant. Hence, the reality of being captured never clearly emerged until the experience was actually occurring.

Only at the time of capture was the role of authority in a prisoner-of-war situation finally received. The dilemma each prisoner of war faced in the Vietnam War was that the North Vietnamese had access to a great deal of intelligence and knew from newspapers and other public sources a lot about American military affairs. The interrogators would not settle for name, rank, serial number, and date of birth. If a prisoner behaved to the letter of the Code of Conduct, he stood a good chance of a slow and futile death. On the other hand, if a prisoner gave some information, where would he stop providing information? Moreover, if one fails to obey one article, has he not failed to live up to all the articles? Simply and personally stated, the question was "Would I not be forever condemned as a dishonorable man or worse yet a traitor if I did not fully obey the Code of Conduct?"

The torment of the above dilemma is usually too much for one man to bear. He needs confirmation (Schein, 1969); he needs his fellow prisoners to help him reconstruct some social order to the tangled maze of his fears. Therefore, the concept of an SRO with a command structure became a means for refinding an acceptable self-justification, a social order in which an individual alone in a sea of uncertainty could attach himself to

something firm. The higher the uncertainty, the greater was the need for an authority and command structure.

Taking command in a prisoner-of-war camp is a difficult task. When discovered, an SRO would be subjugated to torture and forced to make demeaning statements on tape recordings. As in the case of Lieutenant Colonel Guy, described in the previous chapter, the isolation and torture of an SRO did not eliminate the command structure. Instead, the role of authority was simply passed to the next senior officer. The sheer virtue of seniority of rank determined who could take responsibility, decide policy, and issue resistance orders. Occasionally a senior officer refused to accept his role of authority, and this refusal caused problems (Coker, 1974, p. 44). However, on the several occasions when senior men did not assume command, those next in line immediately assumed the responsibility. For example, in 1970 the full colonels were moved to the Mint in Little Vegas. No communications were received from these senior officers so the acting SRO, then Navy Commander J. Denton, continued in his role of leadership. The word was passed through the prison that Commander Denton had full "*authority*" of SRO since the colonels were not part of the system.

When Lieutenant Colonel R. Risner was moved into

Little Vegas, his first communication was "Who is acting SRO and what is his date of rank?" When he learned that he was senior to Commander Denton, he assumed command. One of his first actions was to establish a quiet time for meditation and prayer at the end of each day. He would initiate a signal which in turn was passed from cell to cell. When he learned his predecessor's policy on steadfast refusal to see visiting antiwar delegations, he supported and reissued this order even though in the past he had been tortured into meeting one of these delegations (Risner, 1973). The courage of Risner's example after his ordeals was an inspiration to many junior prisoners of war.

After several weeks under Risner's command, Lieutenant Colonel V. Ligon, a resident of more than several months in the Desert Inn, sent a message listing his very senior date of rank to Risner. Although Risner had been selected for full colonel, he was still technically a lieutenant colonel with a more recent date of rank than the emerging lieutenant colonel from the Desert Inn. Colonel Risner at once relinquished his role of SRO to the man who had previously failed to accept this role and sent word throughout Little Vegas that Lt. Colonel Ligon was now the SRO. Such was the working of authority. When an individual stepped forward with a more

senior date of rank, he automatically was recognized and thus received his role of authority as SRO. The primary ingredient was that the individual had to receive his role no matter how he personally would have preferred to ignore this risky and painful responsibility. Regardless of how weak a senior officer's resistance may have been, the date of rank was the ultimate criterion for an SRO's authority (Dramesi, 1975, pp. 192-193).

Role Behavior

According to Weber (1947), the legal authority of a position rests on the rational claim of legitimacy. The impersonality of office was destined to make bureaucracy a scientifically calculated response to the complexity of modern society and its problems. In the prisoner-of-war organization of Hanoi, the passage of SRO from one man to another was based on the legal grounds of military rank and the moral force of the Code of Conduct. However, the resultant behavior of those in authority roles was by no means impersonal. The SRO often was viewed as exposing himself to great danger to *personally* help another prisoner. Consequently the role of authority in many cases elicited positive identification, instead of mere compliance, and sometimes was the major factor in developing internalization of the values outlined in the Code of Conduct.

What would account for this stronger response? The answer lies in the mutual feeling or sense of community which was reflected in communications. In normal conditions, the hierarchy of an organization has vertical and horizontal communication in its system. Katz and Kahn (1966) report that the content of information passed up, down, and laterally is different. As early as Sayles (1964) and as recently as Mintzberg (1973), the importance of lateral communication has been stressed as a source of "emotional and social support to the individual" (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 244). At first the harsh conditions of imprisonment imposed by the North Vietnamese resulted in the SRO and other high ranking officers' participating in both vertical and lateral communication with subordinates. Instead of an impersonality of office, senior officers were forced to share their problems and feelings with much lower ranking officers. Prisoners were constantly exchanging encouragement to one another as described in the previous chapter. The result of such communication was that the senior ranking officers were more than just "top brass"; in the eyes of subordinates, people could distinguish between the person and the role of authority he was expected to perform. Hence, deep interpersonal relationships developed between senior and junior prisoners that heightened

personal commitment to those in authority. The sense of community was an integral part of respect for authority.

At times respect for authority as defined above became internalized by prisoners who had never been close to the SRO. How can this increased level of control be explained? From experiences at the Plantation in 1971 and 1972, the answer appears to lie in the overreaction by the North Vietnamese in their use of torture. When the SRO was discovered providing leadership (as with Colonel Guy), policies through the next senior officer were continued not because of any external rewards or threat of later punishment, but on account of the personal commitment made to the man (referent power), his lawful *authority* (legitimate power), and the values of the Code of Conduct internalized through these serious and brutal attacks by the North Vietnamese. In the face of such cruelty (McGrath, 1975, pp. 60-91), prisoners were able to transform feelings of revenge into the more "noble cause" of resistance which freed "the resources and energies that are necessary to engage in active opposition" (Blau, 1964, p. 251). In this way the role of authority began as a legitimate position with moral influence for unity. By attacking the legitimacy of this social order, the North Vietnamese solidified the unity of the prisoner-of-war organization. In the words

of Peabody (1964) "in periods of crisis, formal authority is magnified" (p. 137). And the North Vietnamese were resourceful at creating crises for American prisoners of war (Risner, 1973).

Many prisoners of war in Hanoi wanted strong leadership. Subordinates accepted a wide latitude of what the position of authority could dictate. Commander D. Clower expressed how his men looked to him for the strength he sometimes wondered if he himself had:

But the men wanted leadership. They wanted a hard core leadership. So although at times it bothered me to tell a man to be tortured, I found out later that that was the degree of leadership they wanted. They would rather go that line than go the other. They were willing to take hardships. They were willing to take less. (Rowen, 1973, p. 248)

Commander Clower and other SROs ordered hunger strikes at different times, and ultimately the subordinate reaction was usually favorable. Such a phenomenon is indeed hard to understand at first glance. Why would a man severely underweight and already subsisting on a poor diet gladly obey an order to stop eating? The answer lies in the role behavior they perceived of themselves and the role they expected of those senior to themselves. The desire for action, no matter how ineffectual or painful, sustained the social order and continually reinforced the role of authority through tempestuous times of confrontation with the North Vietnamese.

Coker (1974) sheds some light on the importance of the senior man's exerting influence and control through his authority:

It really did not make too much difference what was being done as long as it was done together. Although there may be a lot of talk, and a lot of group consensus achieved, there still has to be a senior who finally says, "We will do it this way!" If the senior man hid in the wood-work, leaving his juniors to make decisions, it really upset the applecart because it forced each man to act for himself. (p. 43)

The above concept of strength in unity is indeed old, but the significant aspect is that subordinates looked toward those with formal authority to make decisions, set policy, and issue specific orders. The subordinates in this way played an important part in not only influencing but also defining and hence controlling the role of authority. Such a finding is in keeping with Barnard (1938) and Simon (1957) who saw this subordinate influence on the authority structure of any organization. Moreover, Katz and Kahn (1966, p. 187) in their model provide a way for the focal person to make inputs to the role sender through interpersonal factors. In Hanoi, the role expectations and socialization processes were part of the forces which exhorted subordinates to demand a strong role from those of senior rank. The resultant behavior was an ongoing production with the role of authority as a constant to which all could find, in some

degree, a relationship. The question which remains is "What behavior resulted when an individual or group became adamantly opposed to an SRO order or policy?"

Role Conflict

By analyzing role conflict, one uncovers the crucial variable which supported the role of authority of an SRO. Dramesi (1975) presents the role conflict of how SRO orders to refrain from escape attempts were in complete contradiction to the Code of Conduct which clearly states, "I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape" (*The Armed Forces Officer*, 1960, p. 25). However, an important question a prisoner had to ask himself before escaping was, "What will happen to those prisoners who remain behind?"

Rowen (1973) reports that "there were two escapes from prisons in Hanoi, but in both cases the POWs were quickly recaptured" (p. 89). This author believes there were several more escape attempts than just these two. The point is that after each escape, the North Vietnamese reaction was quick and harsh. Coker (1974) describes this reaction as "fantastic reprisals" (p. 45) and makes an argument for SRO orders to take precedence over general guidelines in the Code of Conduct. In contrast, Dramesi (1975) contends "nobody had authority to change it [the Code of Conduct]" (p. 195). To understand this

issue fully, one must examine not only the benefits of escape but also the internal costs.

McGrath (1975) succinctly describes the reprisals after Dramesi's escape in 1969 as follows:

Many men in camp were beaten with rubber hoses and straps. One man very nearly died when he received 100 strokes a day for 9 days. Another man was tortured to complete insanity during this period. He reportedly died. The man in the cell next to me was tortured to death after an unsuccessful escape attempt. I was beaten because I asked an officer for medical attention for a roommate's infected ear. (p. 46)

Because of these costs, senior officers regarded the issue of escape as a matter which would affect every man in their command. Could the successful escape of a handful of prisoners justify the death of many left behind? The answer to this question resulted in the SRO policy by 1970 of definitely discouraging escape attempts. Unplanned escapes were strictly against the decision of most SROs. Hence, organization based on the authority of the SRO and elaborate communication of orders and policy statements inhibited escape. Dramesi (1975) also reveals that men like himself were influenced and ultimately controlled from attempting escapes through co-optation (formal recognition by being included in committees and special task forces). But what truly explains why such men as Dramesi complied with SRO orders which contradicted their values?

First and foremost, Dramesi and other prisoners who desired blatantly active resistance recognized a large role of authority in the SRO. In the words of Coker (1974), "A military man should always follow orders" (p. 45). These men were so well socialized to the military that the role of authority was accepted even when they perceived it to be in conflict with internalized values. An example of this acceptance is given by Dramesi (1975, pp. 235-236) when his cellblock commander ordered him to remain in the cell for two weeks with no washing or shaving and not to take part in any formal activities in the cell. One could reasonably argue that such a punishment went beyond the legal prescriptions as outlined in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Nevertheless, Dramesi's behavior was compliance; he accepted the punishment. The role of authority as Dramesi saw it permitted the SRO this latitude; to resist this authority in this situation might discredit Dramesi after release and such a threat of future punishment held enough power over Dramesi to induce the control of his behavior. Later Dramesi (1975) described the tension of this dilemma as "the real hell of Hanoi" (pp. 223-236). Whether any prisoner of war was court-martialed or brought to trial after his release in 1973 is not at issue here. What really was important is that hard-core

resisters perceived that such actions were within the latitude of the formal authority structure. Hence, future rewards and punishments were the means by which authority controlled these men.

As one might guess, there were also a few prisoners of war that were not only weak resisters but also refused to comply with SRO orders. Dramesi (1975, p. 181) reports that the men in the Desert Inn ate their food during the hunger strike of 1970 at Little Vegas. The antiwar group at the Plantation in 1971 was so against the SRO that they became outcasts from their fellow prisoners. What explains their deviance? If hard-core resisters perceived the SRO's authority to be so broad, could not the behavior of those who refused to comply with SRO orders be interpreted in a similar fashion? The difference or critical variable was how much latitude the individual perceived the SRO to have over him. In other words, what could the SRO legally and morally ask of a subordinate in a prisoner-of-war situation? Commander G. Wilbur, who made a strong stand against the legality of the war as a prisoner of war, stated his interpretation of this problem:

Each person has to look at it and decide whether the order is legal. A senior officer can't order me to rob a bank for instance. I know robbing a bank is illegal. Strict authoritarianism, which goes on in the military, we just can't buy.

"Forward march right over the wall" sounds great in textbooks. But, when it comes time to applying these things in real life, you have to listen to what you're told and try to apply it to the legal and moral situation you're in. (Rowen, 1973, p. 165)

What Commander Wilbur did not address in the above interview was to what degree the North Vietnamese influenced his decision to protest the war. He reports that he was not tortured, but that he gave unclassified information to the North Vietnamese. Thus, by his own admission Commander Wilbur gave the enemy information which was obtained in many instances by the pain of torture from other prisoners. Since the role expectation and socialization processes were similar for all military men, some other theory must be explored to explain this deviant behavior.

The theory. L. Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance has produced a multitude of experiments and discussion over its use or overuse. Basically, dissonance can be defined as "a state of tension that occurs whenever an individual simultaneously holds two cognitions . . . that are psychologically inconsistent" (Aronson, 1972, p. 92). The application of dissonance theory to this study focuses on the threat or use of punishment and its effect on behavior and attitude change. Such effects have been explored in a number of

educational situations (Aronson & Carlsmith, 1963; Freedman, 1963, 1965; Sears, Whiting, Nowlis, & Smith, 1959). Aronson (1972) summarizes the findings of this research:

The less severe the threat, the less external justification; the less the external justification, the greater the need for internal justification. Allowing people the opportunity to construct their own internal justification can be a long step toward helping them develop a permanent set of values. (p. 120)

The application of the theory. Since Commander Wilbur's behavior was in conflict with the expected role he had been trained to perform, tension builds up and could be relieved by changing either his attitude or his behavior. The weight of experimental work done by social psychologists supports an interpretation that Wilbur's mild treatment in relation to others (no torture) combined with his initially weak resistance produced a tension which made it much easier to change the attitude than the behavior already set upon the course of semi-cooperation with the North Vietnamese. A small attitude change at the outset of Wilbur's incarceration increased the probability that his behavior would continue in the direction first begun. Aronson (1972) calls this phenomenon "escalation" (p. 105). Hence, Commander Wilbur was able to so narrowly define the latitude of the SRO as to make the authority of this role irrelevant to the

important questions concerning the conduct of prisoners of war. In brief, since Commander Wilbur had developed internal tension (cognitive dissonance) from his initial behavior, he had to redefine or reconstruct the social order to better fit his behavior. Thus, his attitude toward the applicability and relevance of the military authority of rank changed to support individualistic behavior. The SRO had the authority to tell him when to report to work but could not deny him the right to write his congressman about the "cruel and illegal" war our country was waging (Rowen, 1973, p. 165).

The Concept of Uncertainty

The absence or presence of physical punishment can also be analyzed in terms of uncertainty. Those who faced torture lived in constant uncertainty, never knowing who would be next and what the North Vietnamese would want this time. "Just about the time you were dropping off to sleep, the jingle of keys would drive pure terror through your heart" (McGrath, 1975, p. 90). In this situation of high uncertainty due to exogenous factors, the role of authority was expanded by subordinates in an effort to evade personally defining the discretion of what an individual could say or do for the North Vietnamese. According to Thompson (1967), "When the individual believes that his cause/effect resources

are inadequate to the uncertainty, he will seek to evade discretion" (p. 120). Hence, when physical torture or the explicit threat of such force coerced a prisoner to yield to North Vietnamese demands, the prisoner could return to his fellow prisoners of war and regain the flight of resistance through their help and confirmation. The role of authority supported and often directed such activity. But when torture or the explicit threat of such force was not present, a prisoner of war did not face such a high degree of uncertainty, which when coupled to tensions of cognitive dissonance, produced in their perception enough cause/effect resources to cope with their own situation. Thus, weak resisters were able to create a self-justification in which the role of authority had no legitimate claim to control their "rights of free speech." In the final analysis, the number of men who fell into such thinking were a small handful compared to the many who sought "strong leadership" (Rowen, 1973, p. 248). Yet, examination of deviant behavior and attitude change illuminates how applicable theoretical concepts of cognitive dissonance and uncertainty can be to organization problems.

Above all, these concepts reveal that in times of great uncertainty, people look for strong leadership based on a legitimate source of power; namely, authority

of the SRO in a prisoner-of-war situation. Organic structure is complex and involves high participation whereas mechanistic structure of the more traditional bureaucracy simplifies lines of control. Since high uncertainty (the presence of torture) created much confusion within an individual, mechanistic structure within the organization was most appropriate to the environment. Although the organization of prisoners of war in Hanoi was highly mechanistic at first, as the use of torture and the explicit threat of such force subsided, more participation and greater influence by subordinates resulted. When the North Vietnamese again resorted to torture, the organizational structure became more mechanistic. Subordinates tended to look not for influence in the organization but instead wanted to be told exactly what to do. Hence, the degree of uncertainty helps to explain the zone in which subordinates view that authority as a legitimate claim to control. This zone is not a given one but expands and contracts over time in relation to the amount of uncertainty the members perceive the organization is facing. In Hanoi prisoners of war organized behind the authority of the SRO, but the interpersonal inputs from focal persons to role senders definitely changed with the amount of uncertainty the organization faced. Still the critical

hub around which the wheel of the organization turned was the role of authority.

Summary

The role of authority has been shown as the major influence and controlling variable of prisoner-of-war behavior. In the scenario of a role episode, the role was sent through the Code of Conduct and socialization processes to focal persons who in turn received and performed behavior. The reception and ultimate compliance to the expected role were examined in terms of uncertainty (torture). The more the uncertainty, the more emphasis was placed on the role of authority. Those who refused to adhere to a wide interpretation of the authority structure were found to have experienced little, if any, physical torture.

The theory of cognitive dissonance was used to explain attitude changes which influenced behavior of a few prisoners who deviated from the expected norms. A wide majority who sought a broad definition of formal authority were seeking a *social construction of reality* (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) that would impose rigid limits on their behavior. This expectation once established was hard to ignore, but when conditions did seem to improve with larger groups at Camp Unity, more participation and influence on organizational policy by lower

ranking members were observed. Thus, the more the uncertainty, the more rigidly mechanistic became the structure of the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi.

When an SRO issued an order, he obtained in many cases more than compliance because hardships had solidified his followers into a communal bond. Positive identification (referent power) and internalization of the role of authority (legitimate power) made the prisoners more cohesive and served as the primary means for control in the organization. Despite the many arguments and differences of opinion, most prisoners of war in Hanoi were united behind a wide latitude of authority for the command structure. Such a definition was the major influence and control within the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi.

Chapter 6

THE CENTRALITY OF POSITION

The preceding two chapters have described the patterns of communication and the significance of the role of formal authority to the mechanistic organization of prisoners of war in Hanoi. Although the authority of the command structure was seen as the primary variable in influencing and controlling the behavior of prisoners, other factors had influence on and at times control of behavior. Individual characteristics such as personality, attractiveness, and time in service often were influential factors. If a prisoner had endured a great amount of torture such as Colonel Risner (1973), then he gained credibility and thus influence in addition to his rank. Some prisoners had shot down enemy aircraft before their capture, and this prior war experience tended to induce respect from others, and thus influence. However, in the everyday life of the prisoner-of-war situation, the effects of these individualistic and behavioral characteristics were rather small and certainly ephemeral. Even the glory of an unsuccessful escape attempt did not have a lasting influence or control on resistance policy (Dramesi, 1975). However, the

structural element of centrality of position was observed to be not only a valuable resource for individual satisfaction but also a means for making continual inputs and influencing those in authority.

This chapter seeks to answer several questions concerning the concept of centrality of position. Specifically, did centrality of position (physical or social) have influence in the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi? Or was the level of activity more of an influence than centrality? Did the level of activity change in relation to changes in physical or social locations? Was an individual more prone to participate in communication and organizational efforts if he occupied a central position? And finally, did social centrality have more influence than physical centrality?

The Influence of Centrality

Definition of the Concept

The concept of centrality can be viewed in two ways: physical location and proximity to the decision-maker. The former was directly related to physical access to information. For example, in the Thunderbird of Little Vegas the cells in the center of the row could communicate with their two neighbors and across the passageway (see Figure 3, p. 44). The cells at the end of the passageway could only communicate with one neighbor.

Thus, physical location in the center of the Thunderbird gave a prisoner more immediate access to information and other prisoners.

Proximity to the decision-maker concerns the social space of the organization. If in the above example, the SRO was located in Thunderbird #3, Cell #2 would have more centrality than the other central cells because all information on which decisions were based had to flow through this cell. In the experimental work by Bavelas (1968) and Leavitt (1958), the concept of authority was not present. If the chain pattern was used in this experiment with a military hierarchy, the position with the highest rank might gather the information and make the decision. (Consider Figure 6.) If the SRO was in the end position #1, information might pass from one end to the other before a solution could be reached. The position next to the SRO, Cell #2, would involve much access to information in such a pattern and thus have more centrality in the social order than the physically more central position of Cell #3.

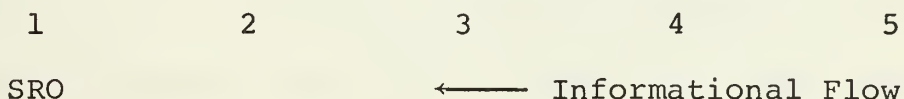
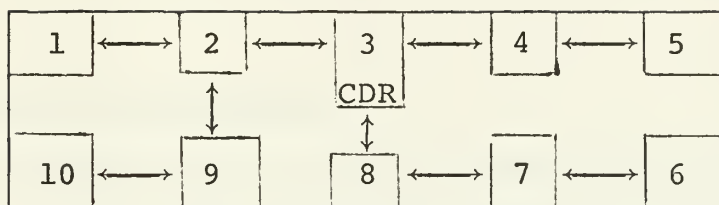


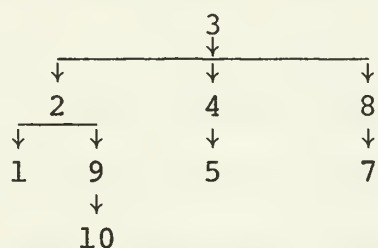
Figure 6
Physical versus social centrality

Because of the paucity of informational sources and the uses which information served in forming a viable resistance posture, access to information became a prized resource for prisoners. Most information concerning interrogations and actions by the North Vietnamese was accepted at face value. In other words, the credibility of the reporting prisoner was rarely questioned, and so this source of power does not fit into the five categories of French and Raven (1968) who "distinguish between expert power based on the credibility of 0 and informational influence which is based on characteristics of the stimulus" (p. 269). The influence and power of information were major assets in resisting the North Vietnamese propaganda efforts. The more central the physical or social location, the more access to information a prisoner could gain. Such access was most critical when prisoners lived in pairs or alone. Thus, the informational influence from centrality of position was most apparent in the communication at Little Vegas in 1970. More specifically, the system of tapping in the Thunderbird can serve to describe the difference between physical and social centrality as well as to show the significance of activity. Figure 7 depicts a closeup of the Thunderbird with the flow and pattern of communication before and after Colonel Risner's arrival as SRO

Before

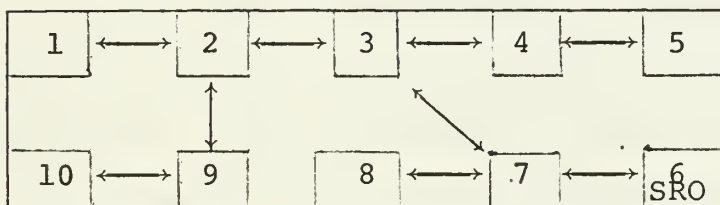


Informational Flow

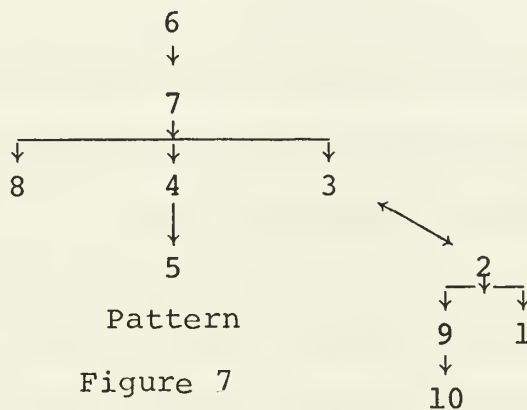


Pattern

After



Informational Flow



Pattern

Figure 7

Closeup of Thunderbird's informational flow and pattern

and is useful in understanding the application of this concept.

Application of the Concept

When Thunderbird #3 was inhabited by the cellblock commander, it was both physically and socially the most central cell in this building. The commander was in the fork of a "Y" pattern, and any piece of news or contact with prisoners in another subunit was passed to Cell #3. Thus, Cells #2 and #8 had the next level of centrality. The prisoners in these two cells generally expended more time in communication, but there were some exceptions which help to shed some light on the nature of this communication. Under this organization at one time a prisoner in Cell #7 was a close friend of a man in Cell #6 whom he had known in a previous prison; these two were avid communicators. Their activity in communication was so great that it sometimes confused communication attempts by others and often made the guards suspicious. On one occasion the cellblock commander passed the order to these men to "hold down" their tapping, especially at night when other prisoners were not maintaining a lookout for approaching guards. Other prisoners thought that their overuse of tapping would lead to detection and threaten the communication system in the building. Thus, activity in and of itself did not lead to organizational

influence; the key was that communication activity had to be organizationally relevant. And the relevant position of power and control in the above case was in Cell #3 to which information flowed and from which decisions were made. Another example vividly portrays this point.

Around November 20, 1970, the routine of the prison changed, and no one was allowed to wash or exercise in the courtyard. Speculation grew over the possible cause of such a situation. Then word reached the Thunderbird from another subunit that a specially trained United States unit had attempted a rescue of the prisoners of war at Son Tay, approximately 20 miles east of Hanoi. Although the prison at Son Tay had been empty, the idea of such a rescue attempt lifted spirits among the prisoners who were now being more closely confined to small cells. The cellblock commander was one of the first prisoners to have this news and immediately formulated a plan to protest the restriction to our cells with no washing and exercise. As could be expected, the men in Cell #6 were the last to get the word and did not fully agree with the plan. Since the men in Cell #8 had been instrumental in advising and making suggestions about the plan which was adopted, their handling of Cell #6's objections could be decisive in discrediting these men before the cellblock commander. The rank and

longevity of the individuals involved were similar. The essential difference was the physical and social centrality of position which Cell #8 had over Cell #6. In this case, Cell #8 had more influence on and control of the organization of resistance in the cellblock than more peripheral cells. The men in Cell #6 followed the plan, for they knew how to follow orders. But even more significantly, they knew their ideas from a peripheral position could never gain influence or control unless those in more central positions were persuaded to endorse such views and thus better represent their views as spokesmen. In the above example, the men in the central positions had different ideas than those on the end; thus, centrality of position was the influence and ultimate controlling variable in formulating the resistance plan.

As previously noted, the frequency of intraprison moves was quite high and aided the dispersal of information. When the men of Cell #6 were moved to Cell #7 and Colonel Risner was placed in Cell #6, the social centrality of position was greatly raised for the men in Cell #7. Figure 7 (p. 102) shows that the physical centrality of Cell #3 still was great, even without attempts to have #3 tap directly to Cell #7. The significant result of such a move was the complete change of the social order in the building. The men in Cell #7, who felt a great

need to unite the building and entire prison in some form of common activity, now had the chance to make their inputs directly to the SRO. Knowing the colonel to be religious, they suggested a time of prayer be established in order to unite all the prisoners in some form of spiritual meditation. Colonel Risner was receptive to this suggestion and stressed how important such action would be for those prisoners who still had no cellmates. A plan of action with an appropriate signal to initiate and conclude the evening quiet time was implemented.

Another significant change occurred with the above move. Before Colonel Risner's arrival, the SRO in the Stardust and the Thunderbird cellblock commander had issued stern orders to refuse any task (painting, writing, or tape recording) which the North Vietnamese requested of a prisoner. The men who had moved to Cell #7 from Cell #6 found direct refusal of the North Vietnamese requests most difficult; they preferred deception and more passive methods of resistance. For instance, when asked to paint pictures of "camp scenes" (the term used by the North Vietnamese to describe prison conditions), one man in Cell #7 had drawn a bolted door with a peep window through which an angry guard was peering. The caption of this picture was "Keep Shilent!" After the former SRO's order of direct refusal, these men

could no longer humor themselves with such endeavor, but with the newly arrived SRO as their neighbor they had the opportunity to make their viewpoint known. Within a short time after Colonel Risner had said that all former SRO orders were to remain in effect, a new policy statement was issued which stated that the goal of each prisoner of war was to refuse giving anything "*useful*" to the North Vietnamese. Thus, active and passive methods had their place in the resistance effort; each prisoner had to decide which method was best suited to his own makeup. The influence of the men in Cell #7 and their interpretation of what the SRO said to others cannot be overlooked. The social centrality of their position was the crucial variable which allowed them to have such influence. When the men in Cell #7 became the direct link to the SRO, their activity became organizationally relevant. Furthermore, their influence and ultimately their control of the organization greatly increased through their ability to use the power invested in the formal authority of the SRO.

The above example is one of many cases in which *centrality of position created influence and control of the organization*. As previously mentioned, the link at Camp Unity to the SRO was through a civilian, E. Brace. In this case, the ability to edit and interpret had to

be employed frequently to condense and transfer information. Because of his access to information and to the colonels, Brace accrued informal power and influence. So intense was the buildup of this power that one of the men in his group suggested that a military man should perform the communication duties which Brace was doing so well. Although this prisoner personally liked Brace, he became increasingly dissatisfied in his peripheral position where he maintained lookout and distracted the guards. The spark that ignited this jealousy was the centrality of position Brace occupied and the influence it commanded. This dissatisfaction supports findings on the more peripheral the position, the less the satisfaction (Bavelas, 1968; Leavitt, 1958). Similar incidents at the Plantation support the above emphasis on the influence of centrality and the dissatisfaction in peripheral positions. Given the influence of centrality of position on the organization, another issue needs to be explored. Were effort and interest in communication related to the centrality of position?

Effort in Communication and the Centrality Concept

When the North Vietnamese cut the doors of the wash stalls at Little Vegas, they gave occupants of the Golden Nugget a view of any prisoner in the west side of

the wash stalls. Soon the separate buildings had a common link with other buildings through the Golden Nugget which served as the central hub of a wheel pattern. When Brace and the author occupied Golden Nugget #3, they spent entire mornings and afternoons on their knees or standing on a bucket in order to communicate. Commander Stockdale, the acting SRO, and Lieutenant Colonel Hughes were moved into Golden Nugget #1, but their efforts in communication were dampened by the latter's reported concern over detection. Later in Camp Unity, these former cellmates set up their beds at the opposite ends of the large cell in order "to get as far apart as possible" (Dramesi, 1975, p. 192). Hence, Golden Nugget #3 did the bulk of communicating with men in the bath area and later passed the most important information to the SRO in Golden Nugget #1 at the safest time for communication.

The flow of information was fairly constant and concerned interrogation strategies, tactics, possible riot plans, and news about several prisoners in poor health. A question constantly posed to any SRO was "What can I do?" Thus, the generation of alternatives and the probabilities of outcomes were an essential aspect of communication to the SRO. The physical location of Golden Nugget #3 gave much information to Brace and the

author before the SRO was their neighbor, but the social position or proximity to the SRO provided insight into the many questions and issues confronting the leadership of this organization and presented the opportunity to make suggestions. When Brace and the author were moved into the Thunderbird, they both felt an immediate loss of access to information. Moreover, it was perceived that any important idea or suggestion from this cell stood little chance of reaching, let alone influencing, those in authority. Now Brace and the author were only a cog at the end of a chain instead of the hub in a wheel. This dissatisfaction not only supports findings on satisfaction in positions of communication networks but also suggests that the more influence a person perceives in a position, the more interest and effort this person will display in organizational activity.

The sequel to the above case adds clarity to this issue. Commander Stockdale was returned to the Stardust while Lieutenant Colonel Hughes remained in Golden Nugget #3. Although he had never communicated avidly or frequently in the past, Hughes began to pass information from men in the bath stalls. Since he was looking out the window, he could be easily seen by both the prisoners and any guard. It was not long before a guard unexpectedly emerged from the Thunderbird and caught Hughes in

the act of flashing information to the wash area. The North Vietnamese asked many questions and then boarded up his windows which already had steel bars and bamboo screening over them. Hughes then found a peephole in the door and continued communication from the floor. Such effort supports Mechanic's (1962) hypothesis that "there is a direct relationship between the amount of effort a person is willing to exert in an area and the power he can command" (p. 359), or at least the influence the person thinks he or she can exert. After the move to the Thunderbird, Brace and the author were communicating at most two hours per day, while Hughes was spending his entire day in communication attempts from the Golden Nugget. Therefore, an additional relationship between location and effort became noticeable in the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi; the more central the position, the more effort a person is willing to exert in organizational activity.

During the upheaval of the communication purge in the summer of 1970, Brace and the author were returned to the former cell in the Golden Nugget. Perhaps the North Vietnamese reasoned that Brace was so old (his missing front teeth and prematurely gray hair added years to his appearance) and the author so young that neither could do much harm from this cell. However, given the

concept of centrality, one could predict that the individuals were not a key variable. Subsequent events supported this viewpoint. The guards became so preoccupied with preventing tapping that flashing and mute code (McGrath, 1975, p. 41) continued all morning and afternoon between the Golden Nugget and the wash area. Men living in adjacent cells passed messages about irregular guard behavior via the Golden Nugget when they went to wash. Overuse of this method inevitably led to detection by the guards who changed their routine or pattern of behavior. Infraction of the no-communication regulation was reported, and punishment of no wash and shave was quickly determined by the prison management. This recourse was common for minor violations (such as an improper bow) but light for communicating. The North Vietnamese saw power in rank and did not suspect the influence lower participants could exert on other prisoners. In this example, the serious tone and intent of the work provided the Americans with a unified system for rioting at a given Vietnamese phrase and also spread the plan for a prisonwide hunger strike.

Upon returning to the United States, former prisoners of war were given much recognition and praise. Several were singled out by the prisoners themselves for devotion above and beyond the call of duty. Brace was

congratulated by many for his fine performance, especially in the summer of 1970, and was included in several interviews for television, radio, and magazine articles. In turn, the author received the Bronze Star with Combat "V" for establishing and maintaining intracamp communications. The point behind this recognition is that the prestige or status could never have been achieved without the centrality of position. When moved to peripheral cells, the incentive to communicate was greatly diminished, and activity in communication usually decreased. When in central cells, especially cells adjacent to the SRO, perception of the role as having some influence had immediate as well as possible long-term benefits. Since the North Vietnamese did not show as much concern over infractions of regulations by lower participants, they could weigh the costs and benefits of communication in a different ratio than some of the more senior officers. In the terminology of Thompson (1967), the "cause/effect resources" were in a state of fluctuation (p. 118). Influence and power were perceived to lie in central cells, so relentless efforts were exerted in organizational activity from central positions. In peripheral positions, little influence was perceived; less effort was exerted; and simply awaiting word of SRO policy was acceptable.

Centrality of Position and
Formal Authority

Centrality of position and formal authority in the role of the SRO have been shown as great influences and controlling variables in the organization of prisoners of war in Hanoi. Several questions remain; namely, did centrality of position yield more influence and control than the role of authority? In cases of conflict, which variable did most to explain subsequent behavior. Because of the physical and social nature of the centrality concept, one must be careful to distinguish the two and see the difference between the influence of social centrality and the role of authority. In other words, social centrality in the form of proximity to the SRO was a recognition of formal authority's influence and ultimate control of the organization. Prisoners close to the SRO often made suggestions and thus influenced SRO decisions. But once the decision came from the SRO, little if any conflict arose. Although a hunger strike may have been unpleasant and only followed half-heartedly, most prisoners obeyed SRO orders (Coker, 1974; Dramesi, 1975, p. 181). In short, the role of formal authority was the ultimate source of power which controlled prisoner behavior within the organization and often before the North Vietnamese. However, it must be added that if the North Vietnamese wanted something badly enough, they

could expend the time in torture and get what they wanted. The influence of the SRO in many cases raised the cost of such force by the North Vietnamese.

Deviant behavior usually originated from peripheral positions. For example, in the hunger strike discussed by Dramesi (1975, p. 181), the non-fasting prisoners in the Desert Inn were not in routine communication with the rest of the prison. In fact, several men in the Desert Inn had threatened to report any intercell communication to the North Vietnamese. Hence, these men were not always aware of the internal organization and worked to keep themselves in such a state. They refused to recognize the latitude of authority in the SRO position which other prisoners saw in this position, but in case the future proved their interpretation incorrect, they might claim they did not know the SRO policy. Therefore, in most cases of conflict, the question was centered squarely on the role of authority; centrality of position was not a factor except for its absence.

In several cases prisoners in physically central locations held vastly different ideas on methods of resistance from those more senior in rank. When Lieutenant Colonel Hughes became the cellblock commander of the Thunderbird, he set an example of unpredictable behavior by shouting short phrases such as "Hey! Hey! Santa Fe!"

at any time of day or night. His reported intention was to raise the morale of his men, but the prisoners in the physically central cell saw his actions as a danger not only to himself but also to communication for all in the Thunderbird. Although Hughes never ordered others to follow his example, word quickly spread in the communication network that he was acting alone and all other prisoners were to continue their normal routine. The latter part of this message was added by the men in the physically central cell; it was their way of controlling those who now might wish to join in the colonel's shout program. The significant result of their action was that no other prisoners, even those who supported such emotional outbursts, joined the colonel in shouting out slogans. The men in the central cell effectively controlled other prisoners, but only by adding to the cell-block commander's message. In short, through the role of authority, their views were legitimized; through their physical centrality of position, they were able to disseminate a policy which controlled others under the guise that such policy was emanating from formal authority. In this case an actual conflict did not exist because Hughes never expressed a desire for other prisoners to follow his example. More importantly, a conflict was avoided by the quick action of accenting Hughes' own

explanation of his behavior and adding something to this message which kept others from joining these erratic outbursts.

In Camp Unity, Colonel Hughes continued his outbursts and unpredictable behavior in the large cell, but now he was not the cell commander. Dramesi (1975, pp. 217-219) describes how Hughes' shouting resulted in confrontation and torture for Hughes himself, but reaction to this torture reveals how much formal authority could control prisoner behavior. The cell commander did not approve of Hughes and ordered his men to do nothing. Dramesi and other prisoners felt that even "a crazy American" deserved more than this inaction, but in the end no action was taken to protest the torture of Hughes whose cries were easily heard by all his former cellmates (Dramesi, 1975, p. 219). No matter how much influence, or in Mechanic's (1962) terms informal power, an individual had within a cell or cellblock, the final control of organizational activity lay in the hands of the most senior man. The role of formal authority was the bedrock of all organization by prisoners of war in Hanoi. Although many individualistic characteristics at times had an influence on and control of the organization, there was no source of control stronger than the role of authority.

The concept of centrality was consistent with the above interpretation because social proximity to the SRO was indeed a recognition of formal authority's role. When social and physical centrality coincided in the same position, there were fewer linkages to maintain in the system and SRO orders were more quickly disseminated. Structural elements, not individualistic characteristics, explain how this organization worked so well despite the adverse conditions. Such effectiveness tends to support Dubin's findings (1959) on radial linkage being the most efficient pattern which Caplow (1964) found to be "interesting but essentially unsupported" (p. 261). Colonel Risner's move into Thunderbird #6 supports such emphasis because when Thunderbird #3 could tap directly to Thunderbird #7, the time expended in communication was greatly reduced, and SRO policy was more effectively understood. Several prisoners mentioned at this time that it would have been more "convenient" if the North Vietnamese had moved Colonel Risner into Thunderbird #3. Experiences from tap code communication in several prisons showed that when the SRO was in the most physically central location, efficiency through the network and effectiveness in more cohesive resistance behavior resulted.

Another example of the increase in efficiency and

effectiveness through reduction of linkages is found in the procedures of written communication. When specialization of written notes was attempted, much time and effort were exerted in trying to assign central cells the task of preparing notes to other subunits. For example, in several buildings at the Plantation, the task of writing notes fell to prisoners in the most central cell of a basic chain pattern. In fact, Colonel Guy assigned the writing job at first to men in the most central cell. The intention of this effort was to reduce time of communication and also increase accuracy by eliminating needless stages or relay stations.

Centrality of position was a powerful factor of influence in the prisoner-of-war organization. When combined with the role of authority, this concept of centrality explains much of the control in the resistance efforts of the prisoners. Moreover, those prisoners who were located in the central positions not only were able to accrue "informal power" through access to persons and information (Mechanic, 1962), but also were able to influence and at times control organizational activity by their relationships with those in formal authority positions. One of the clearest evidences of this influence was the great satisfaction in central positions and the dissatisfaction with peripheral cells. Although

these concepts have been proposed and tested in laboratory settings, little evidence has been brought forward to support the theory from everyday life. The unique conditions of the prisons in North Vietnam have given this study a rich background to explore these concepts, but the question of how to apply these concepts to a business of social setting remains unanswered. The final chapter will summarize and shed some light on the application of these concepts.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Unlike previous wars, American prisoners of war during the war in Vietnam were isolated or in very small groups until 1971 or until the end of their captivity approached. Communication was strictly forbidden. Yet having learned important lessons from the Korean War, the American prisoners of war relied heavily on their fellow prisoners for support and strength to resist. For example, in the Korean War once prisoners "had collaborated even a little they were ostracized by their buddies, thus losing the support of the group" (Schein, 1958, p. 324). In Vietnam, prisoners of war applied the notion that never falling was impossible and that once having fallen, the prisoner needed the group as wings in order to regain the flight of resistance. Since Americans were kept from looking at--let alone talking to--one another, the task of organization and group support was made most difficult.

Numerous press conferences in 1973 and several publications (Coker, 1974, Dramesi, 1975; McGrath, 1975; Risner, 1973; Rowen, 1973) revealed that a viable communication network did exist and was a valuable sustaining

force for many returned prisoners. Yet no study has analytically elaborated how the prisoners of war built and maintained their organization. This study not only describes the communication system of three prisons in Hanoi but also analyzes what variables influenced and at times controlled the attitudes and behavior of these prisoners of war. Moreover, a theoretical framework was developed from several works on organizational theory which raised key issues for this study. In this way this research demonstrates which bits and pieces of organizational theory were found by trial and error to work in the harsh conditions of the North Vietnamese prisons.

The American combatant was at the outset of the Vietnam War better prepared for incarceration and brutal treatment because of the Code of Conduct and socialization processes. The first and most sacred rule was to trust your fellow prisoner and help him to resist. American leadership refused to remain isolated and communicated by tapping on walls and passing secret notes in spite of the risk of detection and harsh punishment. Each prison was organized into sections with "comm block" commanders and one SRO who held the ultimate role of authority. This role was determined solely by whoever was the most senior ranking officer willing to take

command. The structure of such an organization was more mechanistic than organic.

When the prisoners lived alone or in pairs, the function of communication was basically to provide interaction and thus was a means for retaining a healthy self-image in a social order. When the North Vietnamese changed this structure so that there were larger groups, the function of communication shifted to an emphasis on resistance policies as manifested by an analysis of the informational content of messages in the system. This finding is in contrast to Tannenbaum (1968, p. 34) who describes a one-way relationship as "functions determine structure." Because the size of the groups was beyond the control of the prisoners, changes in structure often produced changes in the functions within the prisoner-of-war organization. Such a finding might be applicable to an organization which is so heavily impacted by exogenous forces that structural changes are dictated to the organization rather than by the organization.

A key concept of this study is the emphasis of the role of authority. Peabody (1964) noted that authority increases in times of crisis. This research has shown that the mechanistic structure of the prisoner-of-war organization became more mechanistic in times of increasing uncertainty when the North Vietnamese resorted to

torture. Such an observation is in keeping with Barnard (1938), Simon (1957), and Thompson (1967) who perceived authority as a zone of acceptance. Thompson (1967) proposed that the expansion of this zone was in truth an evasion of discretion by individuals who thought their cause/effect resources to be inadequate to cope with the uncertainty. Such was the case in Hanoi where prisoners of war looked for strong leadership and expanded the role of SRO authority in times of great uncertainty. This study has shown that such a strict mechanistic structure can and still does work under certain conditions where roles of authority are a foundation upon which an organization is built.

Another core idea of this research concerns the rise of informal power. All too often social scientists become so behaviorally orientated that informal power is explained by personality, charisma, and other personal characteristics. Of course, these variables often are important, but in empirical studies such as McCleery (1968, 1972) and Scheff (1961), personality and individual characteristics were not the source of power. Instead position or location which gave groups access to people and information was the source of power.

Mechanic (1962) hypothesized that the more central a position, the more power that position can command.

This study of prisoner-of-war organization has revealed how distinct patterns of communication resulted in physical and social centrality of position. Those men closest to the SRO occupied socially central positions and were seen to exert considerable influence on and at times control of the organization. The more central the position, the more activity was observed in that position. The more central the position, the more satisfaction was experienced in that position. In contrast, the more peripheral the position, the more dissatisfaction was expressed in that position. Such conclusions were hypothesized and supported experimentally by both Bavelas (1968) and Leavitt (1958). Moreover, the effort and interest in participating in the organization were observed to be directly related to the amount of influence one could exert. Therefore, the more central the position, the more effort and interest were found in the occupant of that position. A major contribution of this study to the existing body of literature comes from examples of how centrality of position led to informal power, influence, and at times control of the organization. Such a concept might have been at work in the Nixon Administration's organization during the crisis of the "Watergate" affair and may explain how some of the abuses of presidential power occurred.

This research has also shown that when the prisoners had a choice, they invariably tried to reduce the number of linkages in their communication patterns. Such a desire was seen in efforts to tap across the passageway in the Thunderbird section of Little Vegas and in the selection of personnel to write notes in the Plantation. The fewer the linkages, the less chance of omission or misinterpretation of information in the relay process was found. This conclusion about minimum linkages is valuable preliminary evidence to support the hypothesis presented in both Dubin (1959) and Guetzkow and Dill (1957) on the relationship between the number of linkages and the efficiency and effectiveness of the group to solve problems.

Above all, prisoners of war were united in misfortune and place. They suffered under incessant hammer blows of adversity which gave them a common sense of injustice. Through the covert communication system, close personal and emotionally deep bonds were established upon open and authentic expression of feelings. It was this sense of fellowship which supported the community and fostered an additional respect for authority which sustained the American prisoner of war through the long and frustrating Vietnam War. Informal power did arise in this system, but it often was the oil which

lubricated the mechanistic machinery of a military hierarchy. Personality and other personal characteristics played a part in influencing the organization, but the most pervasive underlying and yet subtle source of informal power was the centrality of position. Still, the primary variable which controlled the organization was the role of authority as seen in the SRO. This position was the helmsman of the ship, the master of their fates. There can be no understanding of the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi without a clear concept of how this role impinged upon each prisoner. At times the SRO role was filled by men of great leadership and moral example, and at other times the SRO role was occupied by a reluctant performer who in the past had not chosen to take part in the organization. But this authority did not attach itself to the person; rather it was an office on which the remaining social order was constructed. The role of authority and the sense of a community sustained by a communication system were the bedrock upon which the survival of the nearly unanimous majority of prisoners of war rested.

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APPENDIX

CODE OF CONDUCT

I

I am an American fighting man. I serve in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.

II

I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command, I will never surrender my men while they still have the means to resist.

III

If I am captured I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy.

IV

If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information or take part in any action which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am senior, I will take command. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me and will back them up in every way.

V

When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am bound to give only name, rank, service number, and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause.

VI

I will never forget that I am an American fighting man, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.

ABSTRACT

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Many accounts by former prisoners of war from Vietnam credit the communications system as a major factor which helped them survive. However, no one has analyzed how an organization was developed and maintained in the prisons of North Vietnam, where communication between groups of prisoners was strictly forbidden. This study analytically elaborates the author's experiences as a prisoner of war in Hanoi and thus seeks to answer how this organization was developed and maintained. Propositions drawn from organizational theory were used as a theoretical framework to ask critical questions of the author's experiences. From this process, the role of authority in the office of the senior ranking officer was found to be the key variable which influenced and at times controlled the behavior and attitudes of prisoners. Specific geometric patterns within the communication system resulted in geographic and social centrality which was also found to be a major and yet subtle influence within the prisoner-of-war organization in Hanoi.

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